POSTHUMOUS WORKS

OF

FREDERIC II.

KING OF PRUSSIA

VOL. XI.

CORRESPONDENCE.

LETTERS

BETWEEN

FREDERIC II.

AND

M. D'ALEMBERT.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

BY

THOMAS HOLCROFT.

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LETTERS

BETWEEN

FREDERIC II. AND M. D'ALEMBERT.

LETTER I.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, March 11, 1760.

I HAVE too good an opinion of my country to imagine it will attribute gratitude to me as a crime; but, be the misfortunes which I neither can foreſee nor fear what they may, I ſhall cede to a deſire which I find too ſtrong to be reſiſted. I therefore moſt humbly and moſt reſpectfully intreat your majeſty to accept my thanks, for the charming epiſtle with which you have honoured me. I am ſo much flattered in it, ſire, and have ſo much reaſon to be vain of

it, that my praiſes ought to be ſuſpected. My vanity however apart, it does not appear to me poſſible to expreſs truths which are important to mankind with more dignity and force; truths too which unfortunately are not ſufficiently known, to thoſe who ought to be their moſt powerful defenders.

Preſent circumſtances, and my reſpect for the time of your majeſty, will not permit me to ſay more. May we, ſire, for the peace of mankind and the good of philoſophy, which is in ſo much need of you, ſoon enjoy this ſo much-deſired peace! It will procure me the only happineſs I wiſh; that of going and laying my profound veneration, and inviolable attachment, at the feet of your majeſty. This proſe, ſire, is unequal to the poetry of your majeſty; but the ſentiments it expreſſes are, like itſelf, ſimple and true.

I am with the moſt profound reſpect, &c.

LETTER II.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, December 22, 1760.

I HAVE, as I ought, paid every reſpect to the great and glorious occupations of your majeſty,

majeſty, during this campaign; and it was from this motive that I have thought it my duty not to importune you, even with my gratitude. Your majeſty has new claims over me by the beautiful porcelain ink-ſtand, which you have been ſo kind as to ſend me. I received it on the 15th of Auguſt, a day which the Auſtrian generals, in deſpite of the benediction beſtowed on their ſwords, will remember as long as I ſhall. The moſt worthy uſe I could make of ſuch a preſent would be to write the hiſtory of your majeſty; but this is a work reſerved for a pen more eloquent than mine.

May I ſoon ſee the moment I ſo much wiſh for, in which I may lay at your majeſty's feet my admiration, my eternal gratitude, and the inviolable attachment with which I ſhall all my life remain, &c.

LETTER III.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, December 23, 1762.

IN conformity to the law which I have continually impoſed upon myſelf, I have reſpected the neceſſary occupations of your ma-

jeſty, during the campaign, which were of themſelves ſo ſplendid that I ſhould have been ſcrupulous of diſturbing them, however much in haſte I might have been, at all events, to have drawn upon myſelf thoſe pleaſant darts, with which your majeſty ſo pityleſsly wounds me, in the charming epiſtle which you have done me the honour to addreſs to me. At preſent, ſire, now marſhal Daun has ended his glorious enterpriſes, I, unworthy as I am, muſt be his ſucceſſor; for it is the deſtiny of your majeſty to be always at war, in ſummer with the Auſtrians, in winter with mathematics. But, ſire, ſince the haughty and formidable houſe of Auſtria modeſtly acknowledges itſelf beaten, there will be no difficulty with humble geometry. It cannot do better than imitate Meſſieurs Bamberg and Wurzburg; that is to ſay, to pay and be ſilent.

I have ſcarcely any longer a hope of ſeeing your majeſty; I know not when this fearful and deſtructive war will end. I only know, and all Europe knows the ſame, that it does not depend on your majeſty to permit ſuffering humanity to reſpire, after ſo many miſeries; but ſince your enemies are not yet weary of exterminating ſuch multitudes of men by ſword and hunger, I may at leaſt be indulged, now that the

the houſe of Auſtria is no longer our ally, in giving a free vent to my wiſhes; which are that your majeſty may obtain all that ſucceſs and fame which your great ſoul, courage, talents and labours ſo well merit; and, more eſpecially, may your tranquillity and that of your people ſoon be ſecured by a durable and glorious peace; even though, to the great ſcandal of geometry, the treaty ſhould be written in verſe!

I am with profound reſpect, &c.

LETTER IV.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, March 7, 1763.

I AM at length permitted to take breath after all the torments of inquietude, and to give free utterance to ſentiments which have ſo long been impriſoned in my heart. I may be allowed to congratulate your majeſty, on your ſucceſs and glory, without fear of offending any one, and without preſent trouble or future terror. Why could you not read the emotions of my mind for theſe ſix years paſt; the joy which

your victories have given me, that of Roſbach excepted, at which your majeſty would have forbidden me to rejoice; and the ſtill greater intereſt I have taken in your misfortunes; an intereſt that was the more lively becauſe I felt theſe misfortunes might ſome time fall heavy on my country, and I pitied France without daring ſo to ſay. I know not whether we ſhall treat the Auſtrians as we have treated the Jeſuits. The firſt have done us at leaſt as much ill as the ſecond; nor can we ſay, like the Chriſtians, that *the new alliance* (covenant) *is ſuperior to the old.*

But my country at length recovers breath. Your majeſty is in tranquillity and in full poſſeſſion of fame; and, for my own part, I wiſh ill to no one. May you, ſire, long enjoy the peace and renown you have ſo juſtly acquired! May you long ſhow yourſelf the example of Europe; a king equally admirable in war and peace; great in proſperity, great in adverſity, and ſuperior to praiſe and calumny!

With what eagerneſs, ſire, ſhould I not repair to expreſs that which my pen ſo feebly traces, but which my heart ſo intimately feels! How great would be my ſatisfaction to lay my admiration, gratitude, profound reſpect, and inviolable attachment at your feet! But I am very ſenſible that the firſt moments of your majeſty's

majeſty's repoſe muſt be wholly dedicated to the drying up thoſe tears which you ſaw flow in your own deſpite; a much more worthy work than that of diſcourſing on philoſophy and literature. I ſhall therefore wait your leiſure, and your commands, to come and paſs ſome time in your court. There, and by your converſation, ſhall I acquire that information which is neceſſary to extend thoſe branches of philoſophy in which you have the goodneſs to intereſt yourſelf. It is a labour which requires encouragement, and which philoſophy can only find in you; for ſhe is not ſo fortunate as your majeſty, ſhe has not made peace with all her foes. Do not imagine, ſire, ſhe ſo ill underſtands her own intereſts as to wiſh to be at war with you! What would become of her were ſhe to loſe ſuch a ſupport?

Geometry will follow her example; ſhe will ſign a peace like the Auſtrians, and even with more pleaſure than they have done. She will be careful not to attempt to deprive your majeſty of your *hobby-horſe*, notwithſtanding the kicks he has given her. She knows too well that nothing can be taken from you without conſequent repentance, and being forced to reſtore what had been ſo taken. She will travel to receive inſtruction from you, and to convey

to your majeſty, without dreading the reproach of flattery, the good wiſhes, love, and reſpect of all thoſe who cultivate letters, and who have the felicity to behold, in the hero of Europe, their chief and their example.

I am with the moſt profound reſpect, &c.

LETTER V.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, April 29, 1763.

I SHALL haſten with eagerneſs to Weſel, on the firſt information which your majeſty ſhall ſend me of your journey; and I previouſly congratulate myſelf that I ſhall be able, at length, freely to lay at your feet thoſe ſentiments which I feel, in common with all Europe. I know not whether there are, as your majeſty inſinuates, kings at whom philoſophers mock. Philoſophy, ſire, reſpects where ſhe ought, eſteems where ſhe can, and goes no further; but, though ſhe ſhould occaſionally extend her freedom, and ſometimes dare to laugh, in private, at the expence of thoſe maſters of the earth, the philoſopher Moliere would inform your majeſty that kings

kings reſemble each other no more than *logs*; * and I ſhould add, with more reſpect and equal truth, philoſophy would appear to me very *unphiloſophic*, were ſhe fooliſh enough to ridicule a king like you.

All the morality of Socrates has not done a hundredth part of the good to mankind your majeſty has already accompliſhed, in ſix weeks peace. France, aſtoniſhed at having been your foe, ſpeaks of your renown with admiration, and of your benevolence with ſenſibility. Fear not, ſire, notwithſtanding all your wit on the follies of the poets, that the philoſophic poet, who has lately concluded the treaty of Hubertſburg, will by poſterity be ranked with the cardinal poet, who made the treaty of Verſailles. It was natural enough that this latter treaty ſhould make geometry a little out of temper with poetry; you, ſire, are in every reſpect the proper perſon to reconcile them. Permit me however to confeſs that, if hereafter geometry ſhould allow poetry to borrow the aid of fable, it will not be when ſhe ſhall have to ſpeak of you.

I am with the moſt profound reſpect, &c.

* Qu'il y a rois et rois, comme *fagots* et *fagots*.

LETTER

LETTER VI.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, September, 17, 1764.

THE philoſophic work which I have had the good fortune to write, by command of your majeſty, has procured me a letter on your part* much ſuperior to the work itſelf, abounding in philoſophy which fills me with admiration, and with goodneſs which penetrates me with gratitude. What a letter! And how worthy of the hero and the ſage by whom it was written! If we except that it is too flattering to me, it would merit to be ſigned by as many philoſophic names as the archdukes of Auſtria have chriſtian names. But the name of your majeſty is itſelf equivalent to all that the Lyceum and the Portico can afford, and much ſuperior to the whole congregation of the calendar.

I congratulate myſelf, ſire, to find that I think like you, on the vanity and futility of metaphyſics. The true philoſopher, it ſeems to me,

* This paſſage and others prove that there were letters written by the king to M. D'Alembert which are not here inſerted. Theſe conſequently are either loſt, miſlaid, or ſuppreſſed. T.

ought

ought to write on that ſcience for no other purpoſe but to undeceive us concerning what it has taught, and eſpecially on thoſe grand queſtions which, as your majeſty very well ſays, are probably of ſo little importance, for the very reaſon that they give us ſo much uſeleſs inquietude.

It is not the ſame with geometry, which is much more certain, becauſe its object relates more to the ſenſes.* It is a kind of rattle, which Nature has thrown out to amuſe us in darkneſs. The queſtions which your majeſty has the goodneſs to put to me, on the employment of analyſis and metaphyſics, in that ſcience, require time to be anſwered with the preciſion requiſite. I have already put a few reflections on paper, which I ſhall do myſelf the honour to ſend as ſoon as poſſible, if they do not appear to me to be unworthy of being preſented to you.

Pythagoras, to whom you have done me the honour, ſire, unworthy as I am, to compare me, with whom I have nothing in common, except that I dare not eat beans, and in reality for better reaſons than his were; Pythagoras I ſay would have trembled, were Numa, Alexander and Marcus Aurelius to have been the judges of his writings. Your majeſty pretends my rhapſodies will outlive the immortal journals of your cam-

* *L'objet en eſt plus terre a terre*—More earthly.

paigns. I have read, I know not where, that Cæſar propheſied the ſame, to a philoſopher of his time, of whom we have no remains; whereas the commentaries of Cæſar, held in reſpect for a ſucceſſion of eighteen centuries, are ſtill read with admiration.

I acknowledge with regret, ſire, it is aſtoniſhing that philoſophers, contemned or perſecuted in their own country, ſhould not ſeek an aſylum at the court of a king formed for their conſolation, their protection and inſtruction! Your majeſty aſks the reaſon of this. It is becauſe, in the country theſe philoſophers inhabit, the climate conſoles them for the injuries done them by the Sorbonne, and phyſical good is a remuneration for moral evil: it is becauſe theſe philoſophers have ill health, and friends that are dear to them: it is becauſe they regard their country as the wife in the Mock Doctor does her huſband, who loves him though he beat her, and who anſwers thoſe who wiſh to ſeparate them, ſillily enough—"It is my pleaſure that "he ſhould beat me."

You carry your goodneſs toward me, ſire, to the utmoſt height, by your minute inquiries concerning my health. I find I recover gradually, and that I ſhall preſerve it by ſevere regimen, the only remedy in which I confide. All

the

the preſcriptions I have hitherto tried, though reputed *ſtomachics*, or *ſtomachals*, for their name among us is as unſettled as their effects, have done me more harm than good. My ſtomach is like pedants; it revolts at every thing novel; whether in phyſic or food. Should I however be ſo unfortunate as to be obliged to take remedies, I will make trial of the mineral waters which your majeſty adviſes; but I will delay having recourſe to medicine as long as poſſible. I think the doctor and the metaphyſician are, from their incertitude, twin brothers, and ſeem to me to have great obligations to the divine, for not being the moſt abſurd of human beings.

Will your majeſty permit me to profit by the occaſion, and preſent my very ſincere good wiſhes, in behalf of the approaching marriage of the prince of Pruſſia.

D'une tige en heros feconde,
Puiſſe naitre, a jamais, des fils & des neveux,
Qui faſſe le bonheur du monde! *

Theſe deſcendants, ſire, will not have far to ſeek for the examples they ought to follow.

If your majeſty, who will not have a goſpel-miniſter for his profeſſor of belles lettres, ſhould

* From a ſtock in heros fruitful may continual ſucceſſors be derived, who ſhall render mankind happy!

have

have leſs repugnance for a prieſt, I have been ſpoken to concerning a very honeſt fellow, who will only ſay maſs (ſuppoſing he ever ſhould ſay it) for his pleaſure, and who will take it exceedingly well though your majeſty ſhould not come to hear him. In other reſpects, I hear all poſſible good of his capacity, character, and manners. Should it be agreeable to your majeſty, I will propoſe the place to him, with the conſiderable advantages which are annexed to it, and will neglect nothing to induce his acceptance; happy if my ſucceſs ſhould correſpond to my zeal.

I am, &c.

LETTER VII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, November, 3d, 1764.

Being the anniverſary of the battle of Torgau.

I HAVE read the work of which your majeſty did me the honour to aſk my opinion, with all the attention of which I am capable, and diſcovered in it that juſtneſs of underſtanding, and knowledge, which characteriſe your writings,

writings, and converſation. It nevertheleſs ſeems to me that your majeſty might in ſome degree qualify the ſuperiority you have given to Bayle and Gaſſendi, over Deſcartes and Leibnitz. I think, like you, that ſufficient juſtice is not done to Gaſſendi, who was a moſt enlightened man, highly learned and ſage: yet I do not believe that either he or Bayle ought to be preferred, without reſtriction, to Deſcartes and Leibnitz; for neither Gaſſendi nor Bayle can be ſaid to have made any of thoſe diſcoveries in ſcience which characteriſe the man of genius; whereas Deſcartes invented the application of Algebra to geometry, and Leibnitz fluxions. Your majeſty no doubt means to ſay that thoſe two great men did not reaſon ſo clearly as Bayle and Gaſſendi, regarding them merely as metaphyſicians; in which I am entirely of your opinion. The firſt were creative minds, the two latter *excelling*;* but it does not ſeem eaſy to me to adjuſt the rank between the two ſpecies of mind; and I beſide fear your majeſty ſhould again draw upon yourſelf the arms of France and Germany, ſhould you ſeem too much to lower the two philoſophic heroes of thoſe nations.

With reſpect to Mallebranche, I give him up to your majeſty. I think him very inferior, in

* Des eſprits *excellens*.

every

every view, as a philoſopher, to Bayle and Gaſſendi. He even appears to me to be leſs a great philoſopher than an excellent writer in philoſophy. He has clearly diſcriminated the uſual errors of the ſenſes, and the imagination; but he has ſubſtituted other errors. I never could find in him any thing more than a good puller down, but a bad builder.

I alſo give up the lawyers to your majeſty, the preachers, and all who reſemble them. The babbling of the bar appears to me inſupportable, and the declamation of the pulpit highly ridiculous.

Your majeſty will ſoon be wearied with another kind of babbling; with the explanations which you have aſked from me, and which I hope very ſoon to have the honour to ſend. I have exerted my utmoſt abilities to comply with your wiſhes; ſhould you not underſtand me, it will not be your fault, but mine, or the fault of the ſubject.

This is not the firſt time that the world has heard of the ſatellite of Venus, which your majeſty has thought proper to mention, of which the academy of Berlin certainly cannot be ignorant. As early as the year 1645, a Neapolitan mathematician, named Fontana, pretended to have obſerved this ſatellite four times. Caſſini affirms

affirms he alſo ſaw it in 1672, and in 1686. Mr. Short, one of the Royal Society of London, pretends he enjoyed the ſame pleaſure in 1740; and ſeveral French aſtronomers believed they perceived it three years ago; though others at the ſame time affirmed they did not. Your majeſty therefore was unacquainted with this diſcovery, or this viſion, becauſe you were engaged with other ſatellites, and with ſome other Venus.

You wiſh me too much honour, when you deſire to call this new planet after my name. I am not great enough to be the ſatellite of Venus, in the heavens; nor healthful enough to be one on earth; and I am too well ſatisfied with the little ſpace I hold, in this world, to be ambitious of a place in the firmament. Should ſome ſatellite of Mars be hereafter diſcovered, I perfectly know the name I ſhould give it; that name would be the beſt of your majeſty's generals. With reſpect to Mercury, ſhould he ever obtain the honour of a ſatellite, more than one defaulter, or one courtier, would furniſh us with a name: but this god has too many ſatellites, on earth, to care about ſatellites in the ſky.

That abominable prieſt, of whom I had heard ſo much good, is better pleaſed to remain, in I know not what village, than to go and teach eloquence to heretics. The abbé d'Olivet has

promiſed me to do every thing which depended on him to ſupply his place by another, and thus to accompliſh the deſires of your majeſty. He wiſhes to find an excellent maſter, worthy of the important place your majeſty means to beſtow. Were a profeſſor of inferior abilities ſufficient, we ſhould not be embarraſſed in our choice; but it is your majeſty's will not to be deceived, and you certainly merit obedience.

I take the liberty, ſire, to add to this letter the writing you did me the honour to ſend me. I have made ſome ſlight corrections, which I alſo take the liberty to propoſe; the whole of which conſiſt of the addition of half a line, ſome words ſubſtituted to others, and a few eraſures; which, if I am not miſtaken, will render the work more compact, without depriving it of ſtrength. In other reſpects, I have generally preſerved the thoughts and expreſſions. Perhaps my alterations have been made with a too ſacrilegious hand.

Your majeſty compares me to the kings of Perſia, who endeavoured to inſpire awe by concealing themſelves from the ſight of men. I cannot anſwer the obliging things you ſay on this ſubject; but I can aſſure you, with that ſincerity which you know I poſſeſs, that, did princes reſemble a king whom I have had the

happineſs

happineſs to ſee and approach, philoſophy would little underſtand her own intereſt, were ſhe to hide herſelf.

I am with all the admiration, gratitude, profound reſpect, and inviolable attachment, which will only end with life, &c.

LETTER VIII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, March 1ſt, 1765.

M. HELVETIUS intends immediately to depart, to lay his admiration and profound reſpect at your majeſty's feet. This is a homage which all philoſophers owe, and which a philoſopher like him is well worthy of rendering to a monarch like you. I dare hope that your majeſty, in a perſonal acquaintance with him, will increaſe that advantageous idea of him which you have already conceived of his talents and virtues. His reception will conſole him for the perſecutions which fanatics have excited againſt him; who, collectively, perform fewer good actions, in their whole life, than he performs in

a ſingle day; and who find it a ſhorter and eaſier method to burn than to anſwer his book.

I am not, ſire, obliged to ſay of M. Helvetius as Ovid did to his elegies—"Depart without "me, I do not envy you,"—for I really envy him the honour he is preparing to enjoy; and the more for having enjoyed it myſelf. But my health, which has long been feeble and is not yet confirmed, will not permit me to take ſuch a journey, and I complain of it with more reaſon than Louis XIV. in Boileau's epiſtle complains of his grandeur, which prevented him from paſſing the Rhine, in face of his enemy. This ſpecies of abſtinence is the moſt vexatious regimen to which I have ever been condemned. I am in a kind of purgatory; but purgatory, ſay the doctors of the Sorbonne, cannot be eternal, and mine muſt have an end.

I am aſſured that your majeſty is in good health, that you perform admirable things, and that you have received my new work, with which you appeared ſatisfied. This is my ſole conſolation. After the happineſs of ſeeing your majeſty, that which I moſt deſire is to be able to merit your ſuffrage and eſteem.

I am only acquainted with one work by M. Lambert, which is good, but does not appear to me comparable to any of the works of Euler; and,

and, if the latter be on his knees before M. Lambert, as your majeſty has done me the honour to inform me he is, we muſt ſay of M. Euler as has been ſaid of La Fontaine, that he was ſilly enough to believe Æſop and Phædrus had more wit than himſelf. Not that I mean to derogate from the merit of M. Lambert, which muſt be very ſubſtantial, ſince it is ſo adjudged to be by the whole academy: but there is more than one honourable niche in the temple of the ſciences; according as there is, if we believe the goſpel, ſeveral manſions in the houſe of the celeſtial father. M. Lambert perhaps is exceedingly worthy of filling one of thoſe niches. I am beſide informed he has written ſeveral excellent works, which I have never read. I ſhould think him tolerably well provided for when he ſhould be, to ſpeak mathematically, in the ſame ratio to Euler as Deſcartes and Newton are to Bayle, according to your majeſty; or as Bayle is to Deſcartes and Newton, according to a mathematician of your acquaintance; or, again, to uſe a compariſon which is not ſubject to contradiction, in the ſame proportion as Marcus Aurelius and Guſtavus Adolphus are to a monarch whom I dare not name.

I take the liberty once more to commend M. Thiebault, the grammar profeſſor, to your ma-

jeſty's goodneſs, whom I had the honour to recommend to you, and who by this ſhould have received your commands. You will certainly have every reaſon to be ſatisfied with him. I wiſh the ſame could be ſaid of the work which you are ſoon to receive, and in which I have endeavoured to ſpeak the truth, which was not exceedingly eaſy to be ſpoken. It is a philoſophical hiſtory of the diſaſter which the venerable ſociety of the Jeſuits has lately ſuffered, in France.

I ſhould have written the hiſtory of your majeſty with much more ſatisfaction and ardour. Your victories, your laws, and your works, form an object much more worthy of poſterity than the migration of a horde of fanatics, whom other fanatics have expelled. But this work, ſire, ought not to be undertaken by any hand except your own. It is for the gods only to ſpeak in proper language of themſelves.

I am with the moſt profound reſpect and with ſentiments ſtill more dear to my heart, &c.

LETTER

LETTER IX.

From the King.

Potſdam, March 24, 1765.

I AM three letters in your debt, my dear D'Alembert. The labours of my vocation, the hæmorrhoids, and gouty humours, have prevented me from anſwering you ſooner.

I begin by thanking you for your work on the ſublime ſciences, which I think admirable; for you have deigned to deſcend from the ethereal regions, and lower yourſelf to the conception of the ignorant. I call your manuſcript my aſſes guide, and I am a foot taller, now I underſtand ſome part of the myſteries which you adepts conceal from the multitude. I am exceedingly obliged to you for your grammarian. I think I diſcover him to be a clever fellow, and one who is deſerving of ſomething better than his preſent employ; ſomething which may give him an opportunity of diſplaying his abilities. I ſend you at the ſame time the rules of my academy; as it is a new plan, I intreat you would give me your opinion of it frankly.

We expect Helvetius here. According to

his book, the firſt day of our acquaintance will be the beſt. But it is ſaid he is infinitely ſuperior to his book; which, though written with great genius, has neither perſuaded nor convinced me.

I previouſly thank you for your hiſtory of the Jeſuits. The pope has iſſued a new bull, by which he confirms their inſtitution, and I immediately forbade its admiſſion into my ſtates. Oh! how would Calvin bleſs me could he but be informed of this anecdote! But it did not originate in my love for Calvin; it was that I might not further authoriſe a pernicious ſpecies of vermin in the country; a race which ſoon or late muſt undergo the fate they have already undergone, in France and Portugal.

I at preſent live in the utmoſt tranquillity, and amuſe myſelf with correcting verſes which I wrote in more troubleſome times: but to meaſure ſyllables and gingle rhimes is a very futile operation, compared to that of certain men of great genius, who meaſure the vaſt extent of ſpace.—What is to be done? I muſt ſay to you as Fontenelle has ſaid; each age has its bauble. I am old and infirm, and my poetry gives me pleaſure. Philoſophy informs me there are ſo many diſagreeable things in this world, and ſo few the reverſe, that pleaſure ought to be ſeized wherever

wherever it can be found. The great point is to be happy, even though it were at a puppet-ſhow; but happineſs and indigeſtion ſeldom inhabit the ſame houſe.

I ſincerely compaſſionate the ſufferings and languor you endure, at a time of life when you ought to enjoy all your ſtrength. I ſuſpect there is ſome obſtruction in the viſcera, and I opine in favour of mineral waters, and aperitives. The ſtomach, like philoſophers, is often accuſed of the errors of others. You muſt examine your urine, and feel under the ribs, that you may be certain the liver is not affected. Your phyſicians ought to obſerve whether the gall and the bile perform their duty, and promote digeſtion: they ſhould learn from ſymptoms, whether the meſentery be ſound, or whether the blood be not too thick; for theſe are all neceſſary circumſtances, in order to know the proper method of treatment. In any caſe fail not to take exerciſe, otherwiſe your diſeaſe will but increaſe. Recollect that you are the only perſon at this time who ſupport the glory of your country; and, ungrateful though ſhe be, ſince you love her, take care of yourſelf for her ſake.

Would you believe that I have received a letter from Voltaire? I anſwered him very obligingly. He declaims againſt his *Dictionnaire*

naire Philoſophique, which is printed in Holland. But we know what we know. A propos; it is ſaid you have a monſter in the Gevaudan. You will find it is the marquis, with his roquelaure, who has been miſtaken for a monſter. The tale ſays that he devours children, is very nimble, and leaps from branch to branch. This does not reſemble the marquis. Had the monſter ſlept it could have been only him.

We have a prince from Courland here, who has paſſed twenty years in Siberia. What he relates does not inſpire any one with a wiſh to go thither, and I do not think you calculated ill, when you refuſed to approach its neighbourhood. I hope I ſhall ſoon hear better news of your health; it is a ſubject on which no perſon more intereſts himſelf than I do,

I pray God to take, &c.

LETTER X.

From the King.

Auguſt 20, 1765.

I WAS exceedingly vexed to hear of the mortification you have lately met with, and the injuſtice done you, by depriving you of a penſion which

which reverted to you by right. I flatter myſelf you will feel this affront ſo ſenſibly that you will not expoſe yourſelf to future inſult. We ſoldiers, being ſtruck on one cheek, do not turn the other. What is called honour in the world is no doubt a prejudice; but it is an eſtabliſhed one, according to which the actions of men are judged. I ſhould ſay much more, if I thought I could convince; but all my reaſons come too late, for I remark that you have decidedly choſen your party. Do not imagine, however, that your reaſons appear to me as ſatisfactory as they do to the ſmall circle of friends, by whom you are ſurrounded, at Paris. I love to wrangle with mathematicians, that I may know whether, without underſtanding xx + y, it is not poſſible to be in the right.

Thus then ſhall I anſwer you, ſuppoſing this ſcene had paſſed in converſation——Climates have long been conſidered as nearly the ſame, thoſe under the line and at the poles excepted. The nations who live in the temperate zone only experience ſome ſmall difference, in the warmth of the air. There are indeed ſome places remarkable for unhealthy air, ſuch as Mantua, Oſtend in Flanders, and the town of Peſt in Hungary. But the air of Berlin certainly has never been reputed unhealthy. It is even

even ſo favourable to the French that ſeveral French refugees have died at the age of ninety, and upward. Hence, I conclude, the climate may be urged as a polite excuſe, but not as a reaſon.

Your ſecond argument has ſomething more plauſible in it: the order of nature requires I ſhould die before you; nor can I warrant the contrary. But who can have told you I cannot ſecure your fortune beyond the power and caprice of poſterity? The thing is very poſſible.

Such is my refutation. I hold myſelf to be victorious, and erect a trophy to myſelf, for having vanquiſhed a great mathematician, wholly to his diſgrace, I not having the gift of perſuaſion.

But let us talk on other ſubjects. You aſk my opinion of the hiſtory of the Jeſuits, and I own I think there is ſomething more to be deſired. I expected to have ſeen a hiſtory of the eſtabliſhment of that order, and eſpecially the rules of their inſtitution; to have traced its progreſs in the world; the policy which prevailed in its foundation and extinction; the moſt celebrated names it has produced; how the doctrine of regicide firſt originated in it; the ſacred murders its diſciples have committed; their quarrels with the Janſeniſts; their conduct

in Portugal; and, in fine, whatever promoted their baniſhment out of France.

Your plan is very different. You are equally inimical to Jeſuits and Janſeniſts, who have exclaimed and have thought it their duty to intereſt the throne in their quarrel. The miniſtry may have taken offence, becauſe you have diſcovered their ſecret views; for the duke de Choiſeul, having been daring enough to attack and expel the Jeſuits, will not want the courage, ſhould opportunity offer, to effect the deſtruction of other *cuculati**. But this perhaps he would conceal, and not advertiſe the tonſured militia of the extent of his views. Such are my thoughts on the ſubject.

I bathe four hours a day, and therefore well may reaſon in the clouds, reſpecting the views of your miniſters, which I neither do nor wiſh to underſtand. I am at preſent the diſciple of Thales and Buffon, and while in the bath conſider water as the principle of all things; ſhould water therefore occaſion me to reaſon ill, you muſt accuſe that element: that of the Seine is ſo bad that you ought to hold it in averſion. Many phyſicians believe it to be very unhealthy; whereas our water of Berlin is pure, and wholeſome.

* Thoſe who wear the cowl.

I ſhall

I ſhall add nothing further, except to aſſure you of my eſteem, and to pray God to take you into his holy keeping.

LETTER XI.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, October 28, 1765.

WHILE your majeſty is plunging into the waters of Landeck, I have nearly viſited thoſe of the Styx. An inflammation in my bowels had occaſioned me to ſet one foot in the (ſhall I ſay fatal or favourable?) boat. I approached the end of all my ills, without regret, and had taken the precaution to intreat M. Watelet to aſſure your majeſty that I expired full of gratitude, reſpect, and attachment to your perſon. At length, the ferryman of theſe diſmal banks, after having heſitated ſome days, declared he would not carry me; nor do I know when he will be diſpoſed to grant me a paſſage; though it ſeems to me I drag on life at a little diſtance from the ſhore, from which he drove me. My health is more than ever languid; I have almoſt continual head-aches, and

ſleep,

ſleep, which has forſaken me, does not return; ſo that I am incapable of application.

To this affliction is added the fear of having diſpleaſed your majeſty, in not accepting the kind offers you have deigned to make me. I intreat you would remain perfectly perſuaded I ſpeak nothing but the truth, when I aſſure you my ill health and want of ſtrength, increaſed by my laſt illneſs, are the ſole cauſes which attach me, not to a country which rejects me, but to the climate in which I was born. Let me add, if any thing can recompenſe me for my loſs in remaining in France, and the hopes of tranquillity I might enjoy with your majeſty, it is the intereſt which my friends and even the public took, in my favour, when I was wavering between life and death. This taught me that the eſteem of worthy men did not depend on the wretched penſion which I am ſtill refuſed, and concerning which I have long ceaſed to trouble myſelf.

I perceive, from the judgment your majeſty has paſſed on my work on the Jeſuits, that you wiſhed me to have been more circumſtantial; but it ſeemed to me that the part of the ſubject which relates to their doctrine, inſtitution, policy and writers, was ſufficiently known; and that to have developed the ſecret ſprings, which have

have accelerated the deſtruction of this dangerous ſociety, would have been attended with peril. I therefore thought it improper to dwell on the firſt, and was obliged to paſs lightly over the latter, and be ſatisfied with giving hints to readers, who, like your majeſty, would be able to comprehend that more was meant than met the ear. I thought it more uſeful, particularly for the good of France, to do that which no one hitherto had dared to do; that is, to depict both factions as equally odious, and eſpecially the Janſeniſts, whom the deſtruction of the Jeſuits had already rendered inſolent; and who might become dangerous, ſhould not reaſon reduce them to their proper rank.

I am informed your majeſty is in good health; that the waters have been perfectly ſucceſsful; and that, while you imagined yourſelf in company only with Thales, Hippocrates, for the good of your ſubjects, made one of the party. Your majeſty's convaleſcence conſoles me for my own ill health. A hero and philoſophic king is much more neceſſary to the world than I am. Oh! that my frail and feeble machine might be permitted once more to lay that affection at your majeſty's feet which I owe you; which your virtues, great actions, and benefits

have

have engraved on my heart, and which will end only with my life!

I am with the moſt profound reſpect, &c.

LETTER XII.

From the King.

November 23, 1765.

I PERCEIVE, by your letter, your mind is as much diſeaſed as your body; which doubly afflicts me. I ſhall neither attempt to cure the one nor the other; for your Geometricians have conſtitutions peculiar to themſelves, and a more elevated manner of thinking than the reſt of mankind. Were I converſing with ſome man of literature, I ſhould tell him that penſions were never, in any country, a proof of merit; that Ovid, baniſhed as he was, is equal in fame to, or rather ſurpaſſes the tyrant by whom he was oppreſſed; that, if wealth gave wit, no people would have more than C. P. and their fellows; and thus that men of literature would do well to believe that merit, wit, and the fame which attends on them, appertain to the man, and not to his titles. My man of letters would

be conſoled; would write and be admired, as formerly, and would be happy.

This reaſoning, not being ſupported by xx + y, cannot thus nakedly be preſented to the ſublime ſciences; though it is not the leſs founded on a juſt eſtimate; on a compariſon between the gifts of nature and fortune; on a preciſe idea of what will moſt certainly attract the eſteem of man, and what moſt merits that eſteem; and on the retroſpect which ought to conſole every great man, for the injuſtice he ſuffers, by recollecting that other great men have ſuffered greater injuſtice. I own that I ought rather to have cited Galileo and Socrates than Ovid; but, as we were ſpeaking of the Jeſuits and not of the antipodes, as your ſtatuaries are not prevented from adorning your altars with images, and as your beverage is not hemlock, I was better pleaſed to adduce an author who inſpires man with pleaſure, than thoſe by whom, as it is pretended, he has been enlightened.

Were I treating on this ſubject with a ſoldier, I ſhould tell him, recollect that Caius Marius was never greater, and never diſplayed more courage than when, proſcribed and accoſted on the African ſhore, he anſwered the officer of the prætor, who ordered him to retire—"Be-

"gone,

"gone, and ſay thou haſt ſeen Caius Marius "ſeated on the ruins of Carthage!" It is in misfortune that fortitude becomes neceſſary. I would lecture my warrior on the morality of the Stoics. But what is morality? Alas! it is out of faſhion. Our age is frantic after curve lines. Yet, in my apprehenſion, all the calculations which are ſo ingeniouſly imagined are inferior to thoſe principles which teach us to govern the raging paſſions, and by which men learn to enjoy that ſmall degree of happineſs of which their nature is capable.

I ſhould never have done, were I to repeat all that has been ſaid on this ſubject. I cannot however perſuade myſelf that you will not decide according to what has lately happened; or that you will not deprive your enemies of the ſatisfaction of ſuppoſing they have killed you by their perſecutions. I ſhall be happy to ſee you, be the occaſion that procures me this happineſs what it may; and I hope that Time, that mighty monarch, will draw his ſpunge over the paſt, and cauſe you to recover your health, cheerfulneſs, and eaſe: in which hope I pray, &c.

LETTER XIII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, May 19, 1766.

I TAKE the earlieſt opportunity to inform your majeſty that M. de la Grange has received your propoſal with equal reſpect and gratitude; that he thinks himſelf but too fortunate to have merited the bounty of a king like you, and to be on the point of meriting it ſtill more by his labours; that he has aſked permiſſion of the king of Sardinia, his ſovereign, to accept your offers; that the king of Sardinia has promiſed to give him an anſwer immediately, and has kindly led him to hope that his requeſt will not be rejected.

I therefore believe M. de la Grange will not be long before he will come to replace M. Euler; and I dare aſſure your majeſty that, both with reſpect to abilities and induſtry, he will be an excellent ſubſtitute; and that, in character and conduct, he will never excite the leaſt diviſion, or diſturbance, in the academy. I take the liberty to intreat your majeſty's particular kindneſs, in behalf of a man of ſuch rare merit, and who is as eſtimable for his ſenti-

ments

ments as for the ſuperiority of his genius. I think myſelf exceedingly fortunate to have ſucceeded in this affair, and to have procured ſo excellent a perſon for your majeſty's academy: it is an event that gives a ſatisfaction to my mind which it is long ſince I before have felt, and of the effects of which I am certain my health will be ſenſible. I may at length flatter myſelf I have accompliſhed a thing agreeable to your majeſty, honourable to your kingdom, and advantageous to your academy; and that I have thus afforded your majeſty new marks of the ſentiments of gratitude, inviolable attachment, and profound reſpect, with which during life I ſhall remain, &c.

LETTER XIV.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, May 26, 1766.

ALL the letters I receive from M. de la Grange aſſure me of the firm reſolution he has taken, to profit by the offers your majeſty has been pleaſed to make him, which are as honour-

able as they are advantageous. If he have not yet departed from Turin, it is neither his fault nor mine, but that of the miniſters of the king of Sardinia; who, not daring abſolutely to refuſe their conſent, have deferred it as long as poſſible; hoping that he might change his opinion. But he tells me his opinion is not to be changed. I have no doubt that, ſhould your majeſty think proper to requeſt the diſmiſſion of M. de la Grange, from the king of Sardinia, it will be immediately obtained; in which caſe, as he will as immediately ſet out, it would be well if your majeſty would give orders relative to the expence of the journey. It is very ſingular that M. Euler, after the favours which he and his family have received of your majeſty, during an abode of twenty-ſix years, ſhould ſo eaſily obtain his diſmiſſion; and that M. de la Grange, whoſe fortune they have not thought proper to ſecure in his own country, is obliged to ſolicit as a favour permiſſion to go and enjoy, elſewhere, that juſtice which a great king renders his talents.

Your majeſty wiſhes to have an aſtronomer, and I believe M. de Caſtillon to be a proper perſon; eſpecially as he can educate his ſon in the ſame ſtudies, and enable him to be his ſucceſſor, ſhould that be required. But it will be neceſſary that your majeſty ſhould iſſue orders

to repair the obſervatory, of which it was in great need, when I ſaw it, three years ago. But I perceive, perhaps a little too late, that I here act, or appear to act, the part of preſident of the academy, which cannot have a more worthy or more enlightened preſident than its protector,* and which, to obtain what is juſt, has only to make the propoſition to this great king.

The prince of Brunſwic is here eſteemed, beloved, and ſought after by every body. He has been at the academies, and I have had the honour to read a memoir in his preſence, at the academy of ſciences. He was yeſterday at the French academy, and I believe was not diſguſted with the manner of his reception. All are ſo eager to enjoy his company that I have only had the pleaſure of converſing a few moments with him, to aſſure him of my reſpectful attachment to his auguſt houſe, and to an uncle ſtill more auguſt.

I am, with the moſt profound reſpect, &c.

P. S. I have a favour to requeſt from your majeſty, which is that you would permit M. de la Grange to paſs through Paris, in his road to

* After the death of Maupertuis, the king appointed himſelf perpetual preſident of his academy. It is ſaid, he determined never more to entruſt that office to another perſon. T.

Berlin. It is true, this will increaſe the length of his journey; but, not to mention the pleaſure I ſhall have to ſee him, I can inform him of ſeveral things, concerning the academy, which it is right he ſhould know; that he may be of the greater utility in his future office, which he will certainly fill with ſucceſs.

LETTER XV.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, July 11, 1766.

M. De la Grange muſt have written, ſome time ſince, to teſtify his profound gratitude to your majeſty, and his inclination to accept your offers. I am ſurpriſed that the expected permiſſion of the king of Sardinia ſhould be ſo long delayed; but the court of Turin, as your majeſty better than any perſon knows, is not haſty in coming to a determination. I however ſhall be delighted to ſee M. de la Grange at Berlin, ſince he will be an excellent ſubſtitute for M. Euler, and much more uſeful to the academy than I could be. This is no falſe modeſty, but the ſimple truth. M. de la Grange is young, and

and I am almoſt old; his ardour is riſing, mine is on the decline; he is getting up, and I am going to bed.

Your majeſty it is ſaid is deſirous to have an aſtronomer. If you need only one, and have not formed other views, relative to M. de Caſtillon, from the particular ſtudy which he has made of aſtronomy and optics, I think him a very proper perſon for the place. If I do not miſtake, the obſervatory of the academy is in need of repairs, and improvements; at leaſt if it be in the ſtate in which I ſaw it three years ago. Be this as it may, I wait the ultimate orders of your majeſty, if you ſhould have any to give. I flatter myſelf you will do juſtice to my zeal, and the deſire I have to be uſeful to the academy; and it is for this reaſon that I propoſe M. de Caſtillon.

The hereditary prince of Brunſwic is departed with the general eſteem, and praiſes, of all thoſe who have had the happineſs to be acquainted with him; and I imagine he is well ſatisfied with his reception, of which, paſt all doubt, he was highly worthy. We have the duke de Deux-Ponts here, who is by no means ſo popular, though he had the honour to command that fine army of the empire which diſtinguiſhed itſelf ſo much, in the laſt war, and which contended with the Swedes for fame.

I know

I know not whether I have mentioned an abridgment of eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, printed at Berne. The place of printing it was well choſen, and brings to my mind the ſong which begins—*Bernons Bernis, puiſqu'il nous berne* *. It is an edifying work, and the preface in particular deſerves to be read. It ſeems to me to be by the hand of the maſter †; and, be the author who he will, Reaſon ought to return him her thanks.

I am with the moſt profound reſpect, and every ſentiment of gratitude and inviolable attachment, which I ſhall eternally preſerve, &c.

P. S. I have juſt received a letter from M. Bitaubé, who ſeems moſt gratefully affected by your majeſty's kindneſs, and determined to merit it more and more.

* This is a play on words, which cannot be tranſlated. *Berner* ſignifies to ridicule, or toſs in a blanket; Bernis was the well-known cardinal and miniſter of whom the king ſpeaks, in his Hiſtory of the Seven Years War. T.

† *De main de maitre*; the ſignature, or ſubſtitute for a name, under which ſome of the king of Pruſſia's works were publiſhed. T.

LETTER

LETTER XVI.

From the King.

July, 26, 1766.

THE ſieur de la Grange will ſoon be at Berlin. He has obtained the diſmiſſion he ſolicited; and to your cares and recommendation am I indebted for having replaced a half-blind mathematician, by a mathematician with both his eyes, which will eſpecially pleaſe the anatomical members of my academy. The modeſty with which you compare yourſelf to the ſieur de la Grange raiſes inſtead of detracting from your merit; nor will it deceive me, concerning the manner in which I ought to think of and eſteem you. Our academy has a ſufficient ſupply of members at preſent. We have the ſieur Caſtillon and his ſon, who obſerve the heavens. The building appropriated to the academy and the obſervatory are both under repair.

M. Euler, who is in love even to madneſs with the great and little bear, has travelled northward to obſerve them more at his eaſe. The ſhip which bore him and his xz and yy has been wrecked. All is loſt, which is a pity, for there were materials enough to have formed

ſix

ſix volumes, in folio, of memoirs in figures from beginning to end; and Europe, in all probability, will be deprived of the agreeable amuſement which ſuch a courſe of reading would have afforded. While Euler is proceeding toward the north, my nephew is travelling ſouthward. He thinks the French nation the moſt civil and moſt gallant of any in Europe; and, to ſpeak in your own ſtyle, ſuppoſes your politeneſs toward foreigners increaſes in the inverſe ratio of the ſquare of the ills that have been done you.

You tell me of a chronological abridgment of church hiſtory, with which I am unacquainted. I ſeldom read prefaces; I have heard however that the author of this preface is equally inſolent and impudent, and that he has had the impertinence to prove, by a diſſertation, that *Jean le Blanc* meant no more than *Jean Farine* *.

It is ſaid they are ſtill in the habit of burning books in France. This may be one reſource in a hard winter: for ſhould wood fail books will not, provided the writing and not the writer be burned. That would be a little too ſerious, and I ſhould begin to be out of temper, if they collected faggots for certain philoſophers, in behalf of whom I ſhall always intereſt myſelf.

I pray God, &c.

* *Jean Farine* ſignifies much the ſame as *Tom Fool.* T.

LETTER

LETTER XVII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, September 12, 1766.

M. De la Grange arrived here on the 2d inſtant, agreeable to the permiſſion your majeſty granted him to paſs through Paris. We have daily met, and I find him full of gratitude for your majeſty's bounties, and very deſirous of acting agreeable to the opinion you have formed of him. Your academy will not only acquire a very great mathematician, at leaſt equal to any man at preſent in Europe, but a true philoſopher in every poſſible ſenſe of the word; ſuperior to the prejudices and ſuperſtitions of men; without ambition or intrigue; only delighting in labour and tranquillity, and of the moſt mild and ſociable temper.

He has intreated me to requeſt a favour of your majeſty, which certainly will be obtained with facility. M. Euler was the Director of the mathematical claſs, and it appears quite natural that M. de la Grange ſhould ſucceed to that place, ſince your majeſty has ſent for him to be the ſubſtitute of M. Euler, of which he is very capable. If however your majeſty ſhould have other

other views, relative to the place of Director, M. de la Grange, well ſatisfied with the fifteen hundred crowns which your majeſty is pleaſed to grant him, will not inſiſt on this point; he only intreats your majeſty would be kind enough to name a Director before his arrival, in order that the court of Turin, which would not detain him, and which yet is vexed at his loſs, ſhould not imagine that M. de la Grange, at his firſt coming, ſhould meet an apparent kind of diſgrace. It is neceſſary to the advantage of ſcience and letters, which your majeſty protects, not to give thoſe by whom they are neglected the ſmalleſt cauſe of triumph, who would be very happy did the Learned not find in your majeſty that honour and aſylum which they merit.

I imagine, ſire, that M. de la Grange will be at Berlin about the 15th of October. His arrival will not be delayed by the ſhort trip which reaſons of moſt reſpectable friendſhip oblige him to make to London; for M. de la Grange will deduct the time, his journey will take, from that which your majeſty allowed him to remain with me. Beſide that the paſſage from London to Berlin, by ſea, will be much more ſhort, leſs embarraſſing, and leſs expenſive, than that by land from Paris; becauſe of the difficulty of the roads, the inconvenience of carriages, and his ignorance

ignorance of the (German) language, which would have rendered it tedious and difficult.

M. de la Grange has ſpoken to me of another excellent perſon; whom he imagines your majeſty might eaſily acquire, for your military ſervice, and in addition to that for your academy. This perſon is the chevalier Daviet de Foncenex; a man of family and much merit, eſpecially as an engineer. M. de la Grange is perſuaded he would be a very proper perſon to form a ſuperior ſchool of this kind. At preſent he is at ſea, in the ſervice of the king of Sardinia, where he is ill ſatisfied with his treatment. His return will be in the month of November. Your Majeſty may enquire, concerning him, of ſome of the Piedmonteſe officers who are in your ſervice; for M. de la Grange would not write directly on the ſubject, for reaſons which your majeſty will eaſily comprehend; though he ſeems to me convinced that your majeſty would make an excellent acquiſition in M. de Foncenex. Permit me to congratulate myſelf for having at length given your majeſty marks of my attachment and zeal, by procuring a member for your academy, who will be much more uſeful than I could be, and who is formed to do it the higheſt honour, by his labours and abilities. My ill health has almoſt extinguiſhed

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the little ardour and genius nature had given me, and I muſt think of retirement. Yet never will thoſe ſentiments of gratitude, admiration, inviolable attachment, and profound reſpect, &c.

LETTER XVIII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, September 14, 1766.

M. De la Grange will have the honour to preſent your majeſty with this letter. I have every reaſon to believe, from the knowledge I have of his fortunate genius, his arduous induſtry, and the gentleneſs of his character, that your majeſty will be pleaſed I have procured your academy a man of his merit. I do not heſitate to affirm that his fame, which is already great, will continually increaſe; and that the ſciences will have an eternal obligation to you, for the honourable and advantageous ſituation in which you are pleaſed to place this learned man; whom, as a worthy and reſpectable philoſopher, I take the liberty to conſign to your majeſty's protection. My great regret is that I could not accompany him; but a feeble

ſtate of health, which requires the utmoſt care, deprives me of this happineſs. Perhaps it may ſtrengthen, and I will then immediately profit by ſuch a bleſſing, once more to lay thoſe ſentiments of reſpect and gratitude, which I ſhall ever preſerve, at your majeſty's feet.

I was a few days ſince informed of the deciſion, worthy of Solomon, given by your majeſty; which is the puniſhment to which, as it is ſaid, you would have condemned the unfortunate people of Abbeville, who have been lately murdered in France, for not having taken off their hats, when a proceſſion was paſſing, and for having ſung a ſong. Your majeſty would juſtly have too ill an opinion of the French nation, did I not aſſure you that this judgment, as atrocious as it is abſurd, has made every heart revolt in France, which was not deſtitute of humanity and common ſenſe. Philoſophy, ſire, has great need of that protection, enlightened as it is powerful, which your majeſty grants: the fury with which it is perſecuted is greater than ever, on the part of the prieſts and parliaments; who amid the civil war they carry on occaſionally agree on a few days truce, that they may combine to torment ſages.

Theſe parliaments, very unworthy of the favourable opinion foreigners have conceived of

them, are if poſſible more degraded than the clergy themſelves, from the intolerant and perſecuting ſpirit by which they are governed. The members of them are neither magiſtrates nor even citizens, but poor bigotted Janſeniſts; who, had they the power, would make us groan under the deſpotiſm of theological abſurdities, and in that dark ignorance which is the reſult of ſuperſtition and oppreſſion.

It is my opinion, ſire, that the only part the philoſopher can take, who is unable to forſake his country, is partly to yield to and partly to ſtem the abominable torrent: to ſpeak only a quarter of the truth, if it be dangerous to ſpeak the whole; which quarter may be always ſpoken to advantage, and without injury to the author. In more fortunate times, the other three quarters ſhall in their turn be ſpoken; either ſucceſſively or at once; when we no longer have either parliaments or prieſts; or when parliaments become juſt, and prieſts ſage.

This letter will be delivered to your majeſty long after its date, for I give it to M. de la Grange, on his departure for London. I regret ſome few days which he meant to have beſtowed on me, but which he dedicates to this journey. His arrival at Berlin will not be delayed, becauſe the paſſage by ſea, from London to Berlin,

Berlin, will be much ſhorter and leſs troubleſome than by land from this place.

I am with the moſt profound reſpect, &c.

LETTER XIX.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, November 21, 1766.

THE letter your majeſty did me the honour to write has given me the moſt ſenſible pleaſure. I perceive you are not diſſatisfied with the converſations you have had with M. de la Grange, and that you have found this great mathematician to be, as I have had the honour to pronounce him, an excellent philoſopher, and well read in polite literature*. I dare affirm your majeſty's ſatisfaction will gradually increaſe, and that you will find him as worthy of your kindneſs from character as from abilities.

* In the *Correſpondance Secrette de la Cour de Berlin*, Lettre LI. we find count Mirabeau petitioning M. de Calonne to grant this ſame M. de la Grange a penſion, becauſe he had been left in poverty and neglect after twenty years ſevere labour. Mirabeau ſpeaks of him in very high and perhaps extravagant terms. T.

He appears to me penetrated with gratitude, by the manner in which your majeſty received him; and, enchanted by the converſation you have condeſcended to hold with him, he is firmly reſolved to exert his whole powers, that he may equal the opinion your majeſty has conceived of him, and by which he is infinitely flattered.

Yes, M. de la Grange will act thus, nor do I think I run any riſk by ſuch an aſſertion: he will ſurpaſs us all, or at leaſt prevent our being regretted! For my own part I am no longer any thing better than an invalid officer in geometry; my mind is no longer capable of the application which this ſtudy requires, and my health, though paſſable, is only ſupported by eaſe and regimen. I am not without hope that I ſhall one day again ſee your majeſty, and again lay theſe ſentiments, with which I am ſo juſtly penetrated, at your feet. Your majeſty pretends if I do not make haſte I ſhall find you in your dotage, but I am well convinced you never will doat; though, ſhould this misfortune happen, you need not fear my preſence, for let my underſtanding decreaſe but a little and I ſhall doat too.

I have admired, and have cauſed the philoſophers of this country likewiſe to admire, all which your majeſty has done me the honour to

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ſay on the abuſes and atrocious abſurdities of criminal juriſprudence in France;* on the equal though oppoſite fanaticiſm of our parliaments and prieſts; and on the part which a prudent man ought to take among men ſo hot headed and ſo fooliſh. This, ſire, is the very part I do take. To deſpiſe the madman and honour the ſage is my motto, and this is nearly all I can do in favour of reaſon, to which I can no longer be of much uſe, except by my good wiſhes.

But the firſt, the moſt ſincere and moſt conſtant of my prayers, are thoſe which I make for your majeſty; their ardour is equal to the ſentiments of reſpect, admiration, and eternal gratitude, with which I remain, &c.

P. S. I take the liberty to recommend M. de Caſtillon to your majeſty's goodneſs. He is deſirous to obtain the penſion annexed to the place of aſtronomer, the functions of which he performs; and I think his requeſt reaſonable. Your majeſty knows I have never deceived you, and this induces me to take the freedom of ſpeaking to you with ſo much confidence.

* The Baſil edition ſays the letter of the king, here referred to, is loſt; but from this paſſage there is greater reaſon to ſuppoſe it is ſuppreſſed. T.

LETTER XX.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, December 12, 1766.

YOUR majeſty will immediately receive, or have perhaps already received, a very ſlight and feeble performance by one of your admirers, the fifth volume of my *Melanges de Literature*,* in behalf of which I requeſt the ſame indulgence and kindneſs with which your majeſty has been pleaſed to honour the preceding volumes. It contains little which is not already known to your majeſty. I have however made ſome alterations, not always for the better, but that I might not too much offend the quacks of every kind, who wiſh to lord it over the underſtanding. I have inſerted, with ſuch additions as appear to me neceſſary for the public, and ſuch modifications as certain ſubjects required, moſt of thoſe explanations which I had the honour to preſent to your majeſty on my Elements of Philoſophy. There are however certain articles which I have thought proper to ſuppreſs, becauſe I have been educated, not like Mr. Chicanery, in the fear of God and the bailiffs, but in the fear of God and

* Literary Miſcellanies.

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the prieſts, and of parliaments, who are as bad as the prieſts.

I moſt humbly intreat your majeſty in ſome vacant moments, or rather in ſome moments of recreation, for you have none of the former, juſt to caſt a look at this volume, and inſtruct me with your reflections and views. You will find in me that docility which a philoſopher owes to him whom he regards as his chief and his model. What renders the volume intereſting to me is, the opportunity I have there had in various paſſages to expreſs, with that truth which I profeſs, the eternal ſentiments of admiration and reſpect with which I am penetrated toward the hero of the age, ſentiments which can end only with life.

Your majeſty will perhaps ſoon ſee an heir born to your illuſtrious houſe. I requeſt I may be previouſly informed; aſſured as I am of all the joy which I ſhall feel at the event. This heir, ſire, ſhould fate grant him, will have no need to travel far in ſearch of great examples; he will find them by his ſide; he will read the life of his great uncle whom he will deſpair ever to equal.

I am, with moſt profound reſpect, &c.

LETTER XXI.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, February 6, 1767.

YOUR majeſty, I believe, will do me the juſtice to be perſuaded that I never ſhall take the liberty to ſpeak to you on any affairs, except thoſe in which literature and the ſciences are intereſted. I have not however been able to refuſe the prince of Salm, who honours me with his kindneſs, the requeſt he made me to convey a letter from him to your majeſty. You, ſire, will determine whether his demands are juſt, and whether you ought to grant him your ſupport. On this occaſion I ſhall only allow myſelf to ſay that the prince of Salm appears to me worthy of your majeſty's favour, by his perſonal qualities, and thoſe ſentiments of reſpect and admiration with which I have continually known him penetrated, in behalf of the hero of the age. To theſe ſentiments he adds that of eternal gratitude for the kindneſs with which he has already been honoured by your majeſty.

I, like your majeſty, occaſionally receive memoirs ſufficiently violent againſt * * *. Should this continue, ſhe will be more worthy of pity than

than hatred, for the torture is applied without mercy. It is pleaſant to obſerve how the author of theſe memoirs, at each laſh he gives poor ***, is panic-ſtruck the moment the arm falls, leſt vengeance * ſhould repay him a hundred fold, and to ſee him paſs his life, like St. Peter, in denying and repenting.

A propos of St. Peter, whoſe patrimony it is ſaid will ſoon be on ſale. Your majeſty ought to be the purchaſer. How glad ſhould I be to receive a brief of indulgence, which I flatter myſelf I ſhould not be refuſed! The truth is, the vicar of Jeſus Chriſt, it is ſaid, is on the eve of bankruptcy; that the people of Rome are dying with hunger; that his holineſs has ſhut up the opera houſe, to appeaſe the wrath of God; and that the ancient Romans, who required nothing but bread and public exhibitions, would think the modern Romans much to be pitied, who have neither the one nor the other.

M. de Stainville, who treated the French nation ſo ill at Spa, as I was informed three years ago by your majeſty, has lately treated his wife worſe, whom he has ſhut up in a convent, becauſe ſhe wiſhed to impoſe the children of a player upon him as his own. If every huſband in the ſame predicament were to act with the

* The French reads juſtice. T.

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ſame rigour, the trade of our wives of faſhion would ſoon be ruined.

The father of M. de la Grange is unhappy at not hearing from him, and fears leſt their reciprocal letters ſhould be intercepted at Turin. Let me intreat your majeſty to interpoſe in his behalf with the king of Sardinia, that the ſon may be permitted to write to his father; for I cannot imagine that M. de la Grange has miſtaken your majeſty for Jeſus Chriſt, to follow whom he has renounced both father and mother, agreeable to the *morality* of the goſpel.

M. de Catt will give your majeſty the memoir which I read at the academy of ſciences, on the day when the hereditary prince of Brunſwick honoured it with his preſence. It is on a uſeful ſubject, on which I employ myſelf as much as my feeble health will permit, for I have more need of ſleep and digeſtion than of papal indulgencies. I find it very difficult to keep on paſſable terms with theſe two deities; I ſay deities, for I hold them to be the moſt beneficent of any with which the world is acquainted; for this reaſon I am determined, accordıng to the prudent advice of your majeſty, to do nothing by which they may be diſturbed. Nature has given me but a poor patrimony of this kind, nor is

there

there any need of my folly to totally waſte it by the diſſipation of the mind.

I know not whether your majeſty has received the fifth volume of my miſcellanies, which I had the honour to mention in my laſt letter. Let me intreat you to tell me your opinion with your uſual goodneſs. Voltaire ſeems ſatisfied with it; but he is much more delighted, as well he may be, with the letters which your majeſty writes to him, of which he ſpeaks inceſſantly, and with tranſport.

I am, with the moſt profound reſpect, &c.

LETTER XXII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, February 10, 1767.

I HAD the honour a few days ſince to write a long letter to your majeſty, by which I fear I intruded upon your precious moments, and made an abuſive uſe of your kindneſs. This letter ſhall be more ſhort, for I do not wiſh often to commit the ſame fault. I ſhall confine myſelf to preſent to your majeſty the letter and work that accompany this, on the part of one of

of the men of letters whom I moſt love and eſteem, M. Marmontel, one of the moſt diſtinguiſhed members of the French academy.

The work, ſire, appears to me worthy of being read and judged by a hero; it contains important maxims which your majeſty has long put in practice; and the moſt flattering recompenſe the author can deſire for his labours is to be honoured by the ſuffrage of your majeſty, teſtified by yourſelf.

I am, with the moſt profound reſpect, &c.

LETTER XXIII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, April 10, 1767.

WITH the utmoſt circumſpection only do I dare ſpeak to your majeſty on an affair which no way relates to literature; but a perſon in place, to whom I have obligations, has intreated me to preſent the memoir which accompanies this to your majeſty. The ſubject of it is a Frenchman who is ſaid to be rather unfortunate than guilty, and of whom, it appears, even his judges gave favourable teſtimony. Your majeſty

jeſty has been kind enough to abridge the term of his impriſonment by one half; yet this term is expired, and he is ſtill in priſon, contrary to your orders, as it is ſuppoſed. I am well aſſured he will obtain redreſs if he deſerve it; and I humbly pray your majeſty would be pleaſed to command information to be ſent me of the ſentence that was pronounced, that I may give an account of it to the perſons who recommended this buſineſs to my notice.

Your majeſty has done me the honour to inform me you are not of my opinion, in certain paſſages of my laſt work, concerning poetry and muſic. I nevertheleſs flatter myſelf, if I had the honour of converſing with you, on theſe ſubjects, you would then find I think in reality like you; and that perhaps I only differ in my mode of expreſſion. I ſhould be induced to imagine I was wrong, ſhould our opinions be eſſentially contradictory. For example, I join your majeſty in laughing at the late count Algarotti, on the pretended power of painting duſt; nor do I think the art capable of depicting all things. I only think, and have ſaid, that ſounds may inſpire ſimilar feelings to thoſe which are inſpired by certain objects of ſight, and thus excite or recal the idea of ſuch objects.

M. Marmontel will certainly be very much

flattered by the obſervations your majeſty has ſent him on his poetics, and will anſwer your majeſty with more ſatisfaction than he will the Sorbonne, on his Beliſarius. Would you believe, ſire, he is actually at war with theſe good doctors, for having ſaid that Trajan, Marcus Aurelius, and the other Frederics of paſt ages, over whom the heroes of the preſent age have the advantage of having been baptiſed, may, notwithſtanding the want of ſuch baptiſmal paſsport, be now in paradiſe, with Cato, Socrates, Ariſtides, and ſome other fellows of the like kidney, whom paganiſm produced? May I die, ſire, if I know any thing where theſe good folks are; but, if they are in the ſame place with the defunct doctors, I believe them to be in hell; and for this reaſon, that the wranglings to which they are obliged to liſten muſt be to them the worſt of torments.

I have read and re-read, a thouſand times, with the moſt tender and reſpectful gratitude, all that your majeſty has been pleaſed to add, with your own hand, in the letter which you have done me the honour to addreſs to me. You may well ſay you cannot underſtand the contradictory follies which abound in certain countries, no more than you can thoſe delightful and important quarrels which are maintained

between our pedants of the coif and our pedants of the band.

While theſe vermin are worrying each other, the eyes of all Europe are fixed on your majeſty. Men talk of Poland, Dantzick, and the Diſſidents; concerning whom I imagine your majeſty troubles yourſelf but little. In fine, they talk of I know not what! But whither am I wandering? I think I hear your majeſty anſwering me as Achilles did Agamemnon:

Vous liſez de trop loin dans les ſecrets des Dieux *.

I did not wait your majeſty's commands to aſſure the rotund abbé d'Olivet that you were acquainted with the *e* mute wherever you met the gentleman; and that *crép* was certainly a German word. There are more eſſential faults in the proſody of this fat ex-jeſuit; for ſuch he has the honour to be; and I would adviſe foreigners not to place too much faith in a great number of his rules.

The hereditary prince of Brunſwick, who is come to remain here a few days, was received with the ſame welcome as he was on his former viſit; and I flatter myſelf that, though he ſhould not think us very reaſonable, he will at

* Too far you ſearch the ſecrets of the gods.

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leaſt think us very polite, and juſt, as far as reſpects himſelf. I have more than once had the ſatisfaction to expreſs the ſentiments with which I am penetrated for your majeſty to this prince, who can aſſure you of the veneration in which you are held, by all eſtimable men of letters.

Whether your majeſty make peace or war, the thing in which I am moſt intereſted is that you ſhould be in good health, that you ſhould long continue to be the admiration of Europe, and that you would kindly be pleaſed occaſionally to remember the eternal gratitude, inviolable attachment, and profound reſpect, with which I ſhall all my life remain, &c.

LETTER XXIV.

From the King.

May 5, 1767.

IT is impoſſible for me to anſwer you on the ſubject of the priſoner for whom you intereſt yourſelf, becauſe I am equally unacquainted with his crime and his name. Information has been ſent for, to the tribunals of Embden and Cleves; and we muſt wait their report, to learn

learn of what this man is accuſed. Be that as it may, I flatter myſelf the colleges of juſtice, in my dominions, will not carry the forgetfulneſs of forms, and raſhneſs of ſentence, to the ſame exceſs as is done in the French courts of juſtice; nor can I think an innocent man has been condemned, unleſs, during the war, things have happened the knowledge of which never reached me.

You preſs me to tell you what I think of the additions you have made to your literary eſſays. I think I recollect having written to you that I read that part of the work in which you condeſcend to ſink the ſcience of *the ſublime geometry* to the level of my ignorance, and that I highly approved of the wiſdom and circumſpection with which you treated of metaphyſical ſubjects, delicate and dark as they are, for that I thought this the only manner of treating on them, without raiſing up a ſwarm of doctors, armed with anathemas and imprecations.

The part which relates to the fine arts is more free. Men are permitted to ſay all they pleaſe on hiſtory, poetry, and muſic, without dread of any inquiſition; and, as the taſte of readers is different, it would be difficult to find two perſons whoſe opinions perfectly accord. Thus I, for example, have been in the habit of ſtudying

hiſtory by beginning at the moſt remote æra, and continuing to the preſent time; becauſe principles ought to be eſtabliſhed before conſequences ſhould be drawn.

In poetry, I love every thing which ſpeaks to the heart and imagination. I delight in fable *, and ſhould be chagrined to ſee mythology, which is ſo fruitful in imagery, baniſhed poetry. I do not mean to ſay that in poetry a uſe ſhould be made of common-place imagery. But how many reſources are there, for Genius, in the numerous charming allegories under which the ancients enveloped their phyſical knowledge? Though barbarians and fanatic prieſts may have deſtroyed the images of the gods of paganiſm, is it for men of letters, of the eighteenth century, to fall with a pityleſs hand on all which thoſe ages, in which arts and taſte flouriſhed, have produced moſt ingenious? In a word, the firſt duty of the poet is to pleaſe; and he muſt be ree to ſeek wherever he can find aid; the only thing required of him is to be ſucceſsful.

I dare not ſay I have detected ſome logical ſophiſms, in the thoughts of a famous geometri-

* The French reads *la politique et la fable*, which certainly muſt be ſome error of the preſs. Perhaps it ſhould be *allegory* inſtead of *politics*. T.

cian,

cian, on muſic; but I think there is an abuſe of words, the different definition of which, perhaps, prevents me from being of the opinion of this great man.

He allows that muſic can only expreſs the ſenſations of the ſoul; that conſequently every thing which may appertain to the other ſenſes has no connection with that of hearing. Yet he requires the compoſer to repreſent the riſing of the ſun. Does he not mean that he requires the compoſer to expreſs that mild and tranquil joy which the progreſs of light inſpires? That may be; but though we were to aſcend from the loweſt notes to the moſt acute, and again to deſcend, at the will of the geometrician, not the whole compaſs of the ſcale will form the leaſt analogy between the ſight of a fine morning and articulate ſounds. Let us therefore only require of muſic to expreſs the affections of the mind; and let us beware how we imitate the croaking of frogs, or ravens; and of a hundred ſimilar imitations, which are as vicious in muſic as they are in poetry. All things on earth, as well as the arts which are dedicated to our pleaſures, have their limits; if we extend them beyond their ſphere, we do but render them unnatural, inſtead of more perfect. I am only a dilettante, and do not decide on ſubjects of which I ſcarcely

can obtain a ſuperficial knowledge; but you deſired me to ſay what I think, and I have done as you deſired.

As to the abbé d'Olivet, whoſe very humble ſervant I am, far from being angry with him for his *crêp* or *crêpe*, I am under great obligations to him for having cited me; I now think myſelf a famous author, and aſſume airs of conſequence, like thoſe of a poet who has been quoted in the French academy. I recommend my ſoleciſms and barbariſms to his indulgence; for, in this country, men are in greater dread of grammatical cenſure than of the cenſure of the Sorbonne, or even of the pope himſelf.

Proſperity to philoſophers! The Jeſuits are expelled from Spain! The throne of ſuperſtition is ſapped, and will moulder away, in the coming age. Take good care, however, that it do not cruſh you in its fall; for the fall of all the thrones on earth are unequal to the vexation and perſecutions which trouble the happineſs of life. May your happineſs be unalterable!

On which I pray God, &c.

LETTER XXV.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, July 3, 1767.

I DARE flatter myſelf your majeſty is ſufficiently appriſed of my inviolable attachment, not to doubt that I am ſenſible of the loſs you have lately ſuffered. Whatever intereſts your majeſty has an intereſt in my heart; and whatever may increaſe, or diminiſh, your happineſs, does not affect me leſs than that which may contribute to your fame.

I am equally flattered by and grateful for all your majeſty has been pleaſed to ſay on my work, in the laſt letter with which you have deigned to honour me. Let me intreat you to receive my very humble thanks, for the praiſes you have been kind enough to beſtow, and the criticiſm you have been pleaſed to add.

I do not believe that in what I have ſaid, at leaſt not in what I have thought, I differ eſſentially from your majeſty. I have condemned only thoſe who have confined themſelves to common-place words and imagery; and certainly your majeſty is leſs capable than any one of defending that kind of poetry, which ſo little reſembles your own.

With reſpect to muſic, your majeſty allows it may at leaſt recal objects to the mind which are no part of it, by awakening ſentiments in us ſimilar to thoſe which theſe objects inſpire. I own I go a little farther; nor do I think my opinion wholly without foundation. But it is a ſubject ſo metaphyſical, and conſequently ſo liable to diſpute, that I am not ſurpriſed one of the greateſt muſicians in Europe ſhould think otherwiſe; nor do I imagine myſelf, eſpecially in this point, by any means infallible.

I know not whether the expulſion of the Jeſuits from Spain will be of any great good to the cauſe of reaſon, while this kingdom ſhall continue to be governed by inquiſitors and prieſts. I alſo think that, ſhould your majeſty ever baniſh the Jeſuits from Sileſia, you will not heſitate to proclaim the reaſon to all Europe; nor will you keep the motives of ſuch proſcription locked up in your heart.

It is ſaid your majeſty has had the goodneſs to grant an enſign's commiſſion to the unfortunate young man, condemned by our lords of the parliament of Paris in the age of Frederic, to be burned alive, for having ſung a comic ſong, and for having forgotten to kneel, when a proceſſion was paſſing. I thank your majeſty,

for

for this good work, in the name of philoſophy and humanity.

Should your majeſty think proper to name foreigners as aſſociates to your academy, I take the liberty to recommend a man of merit to your kindneſs, who is a good geometrician and philoſopher; the abbé Boſſu; a correſpondent to our academy of ſciences at Paris, and of which he would long ſince have been a member, had he not lived in the country. He has gained two or three prizes at our academy, and I dare aſſure your majeſty he will not degrade the liſt of academicians, at Berlin, whenever you ſhall think proper to increaſe the number of foreign aſſociates; which indeed is a long liſt, in one reſpect, but ſhort enough, in another.

My health is continually in as equivocal a ſtate as is, at preſent, the ſociety of the Jeſuits in Spain. By the aid of regimen I have recovered my appetite, but my mind is almoſt totally incapable of labour. I ſhould not take the liberty to mention ſuch ſubjects to your majeſty, had you not the kindneſs to queſtion me. May fate add that ſtrength and elaſticity to your fibres of which ſhe has deprived mine! I ſhould need no better conſolation.

I am, with the moſt profound reſpect, &c.

LETTER XXVI.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, December 14, 1767.

I HAD ſome time ſince the honour of receiving a letter from your majeſty, on poetry and muſic, abounding in reaſon, wit, and the true Attic ſalt; and which the moſt enlightened and at the ſame time the moſt merry philoſopher would have been glad to have written. I have ſeveral times put my hand to the pen, or, as pedants ſay, put the pen to the hand *, to write ſome ſort of an anſwer to that excellent letter; but thrice has my pen dropped from my hand. I felt it was impoſſible by cold diſcuſſion to reply to acute and juſt reaſoning, ſupported by excellent humour. Beſide, to make head againſt an adverſary like your majeſty, it would at leaſt be requiſite that the little portion of mind which God has been pleaſed to give me ſhould be wholly at my own diſpoſal; but the approach of ill weather has enfeebled the ſmall remains of ſoul I poſſeſs; and, ſhould it long continue, I ſhall have the happineſs finally of becoming an idiot. Still however I hope that,

* This is an idiomatic phraſe in the French language. T.

ſhould

ſhould fate deprive me of this trifling reſidue of underſtanding, it will leave me a heart capable of feeling the goodneſs with which I am honoured by your majeſty; and of for ever preſerving the moſt lively and the moſt affecting gratitude.

When your majeſty ſhall think proper to increaſe the number of foreign aſſociates at your academy, I take the liberty previouſly to propoſe the abbé Boſſu, whom I mentioned in a preceding letter. He is a very good mathematician, and has gained ſeveral prizes, from the academy of ſciences at Paris, and elſewhere. I wait your majeſty's orders to propoſe him to the academy, and ſhall only act in this according to what you ſhall preſcribe. I imagine your majeſty remains ſatisfied with M. de la Grange, and continually congratulate myſelf for having procured the academy ſo excellent a member.

Since your majeſty indulges me in ſpeaking on whatever may intereſt the members of that illuſtrious body, I take the freedom a ſecond time to recommend the profeſſor de Caſtillon to your bounty. He requeſts your majeſty would be pleaſed to grant him the ſalary of the place of aſtronomer, to aid him in the calculations and labours which that place requires; or, which would to him be equally favourable, that you would

would be pleaſed to grant the ſalary and apartments of *Obſerver* to his ſon, who is very capable of filling that place. It appears to me that M. de Caſtillon induſtriouſly and ſucceſsfully applies himſelf to aſtronomy and optics; but that he is in need of a coadjutor, which his ſmall income will not ſuffer him to procure.

If the precious moments of your majeſty would permit, I ſhould be very deſirous of knowing what you think of the grammar of M. Beauzée, a work in two volumes, which I had the honour to ſend you. It ſeems to me to be learned and profound, but a little too ſcholaſtic.

Your majeſty ſhould alſo have received a dramatic piece, intitled *L'Honnête Criminel*,* the ſubject of which is intereſting. Should you impart your reflections to me on theſe works, I ſhall inform the authors of them, who certainly would not fail to turn them to account.

The Jeſuits are baniſhed Naples, too; and it is ſaid they ſoon will be expelled Parma; and thus the houſe of Bourbon will have entirely ſwept them out of their ſtates. If I am not miſtaken, your majeſty has acted a moſt ſage and juſt part, with reſpect to this dangerous race; that of not doing them harm, and of preventing them from doing harm to others. But this is a

* The honeſt Criminal.

part

part which every one is not able to act. It is more eaſy to oppreſs than to reſtrain, and to commit an act of violence than to perform an act of juſtice. The court of Rome however inſenſibly loſes its beſt troops, and * * * *her* * forlorn hope. She ſeems inſenſibly to narrow her quarters, as if ſhe would follow her army and begone. Ill got ill gone, ſaid the late pope Benedict XIV. who, according to another proverb, could ſee as far into a mill-ſtone as he who made it a mill-ſtone. The Sorbonne, in the mean time, which profits by the power it ſtill enjoys, has iſſued an excellent cenſure againſt *Beliſaire* †. It is a maſter-piece of folly and abſurdity; inſomuch that the theologians themſelves, except thoſe who wrote it, are aſhamed of it; theologians though they are!

But it is of ſmall importance what ſuch pedants may ſay and write, provided that your majeſty be but happy, in health, and will be kind enough occaſionally to remember the moſt profound reſpect, and the inviolable attachment with which I ſhall all my life remain, &c.

* *Ses*—her—his—or its. If the church, or any word eſteemed ſtill more ſacred be inſinuated, I cannot ſee the reaſon of this individual caution, when there is ſo little uſed in ſo many other paſſages. T.

† The Beliſarius of Marmontel. T.

LET-

LETTER XXVII.

From the King.

January 7, 1768.

I THANK you for your new year's wiſhes in my behalf, and ſhould have immediately anſwered, had I not been reſtrained by the diet of Ratiſbon, the grave deliberations of which at preſent all relate to the compliments of the new year. The plurality of votes is for their ſuppreſſion. You know that a certain fiſcal counſellor, one Anis, was in his day my perſecutor; and, as I fear cenſure, I am ſatisfied with daily wiſhing you well.*

If my laſt letter made you laugh, it is becauſe I love to be merry on ſubjects that are capable of mirth; and becauſe I have hourly ſo many grave, or weariſome, affairs in hand that I profit by every opportunity to unbend my mind. And why always meet philoſophy with an auſtere brow? I love to unwrinkle the forehead of philoſophers, and to joke concerning their opinions, which, when cloſely examined, have no great

* Here ſeems to be ſome alluſion to and ridicule of perſons or things in Germany, the ſpirit of which is loſt to an Engliſh reader. T.

advantage

advantage the one over the other. The ſage has ſaid—Vanity of grandeur!—Vanity of philoſophy! All is vanity!

Do not ſuppoſe, however, that I can only laugh. I cauſed the whole aſſembly of an academy, in which you intereſt yourſelf, to weep, ſome days ſince, on the ſubject of the diſcourſe which I ſend you, according to cuſtom, becauſe you are a member.

I believe the ſon of Caſtillon is firmly inſtalled in the tower of the obſervatory, and that Jupiter, Venus, Mars, and Mercury, will hereafter gravitate only as he ſhall bid. I made my bargain with him that we ſhould have milder winters, and warmer ſprings. Hitherto indeed he has not kept to his agreement; but, as his reign has but lately commenced, it ſhould ſeem that his power is not yet ſufficiently confirmed, to inſure the obedience of the planets.

I have had two new tragedies ſent me from Paris: The Canadians; and Coſroes. The young authors do not write verſes ill. They err in not making their work all of a texture, and in not preparing and producing their incidents naturally enough. They are in want of enlightened critics, who ſhould guide them on a road in which he who has no conductor may eaſily loſe himſelf. But, if the public treat them

ſeverely,

ſeverely, talents will be ſtifled which might hereafter bloom in perfection.

As for the talents of the Jeſuits, they will bloom no more. They are driven out of half of Europe, and even out of Paraguay. Their poſſeſſions in other parts appear to me precarious. I will not anſwer for what may happen to them in Auſtria, ſhould the empreſs queen die. For my own part, I ſhall tolerate them, while they continue peaceable, and murder nobody. The bigotry of our fathers died with themſelves. Reaſon has diſſipated the fog with which ſectaries darkened the eyes of Europe. Thoſe who are blind and cruel may ſtill perſecute: thoſe who are enlightened and humane ought to be tolerant. Let odious perſecution be a crime unknown to our age. This is what ought to be expected from the daily progreſs of philoſophy. It were to be wiſhed it could influence our manners as much as philoſophy did the manners of the ancients. I pardon the ſtoics all the errors of their metaphyſical reaſoning, becauſe of the great men which their morality formed. That ſect will always be the firſt, with me, which has moſt influence on manners, and which will render the intercourſe between men more ſafe, mild, and virtuous. Such is my manner of thinking,

the ſole end of which is the happineſs of mankind, and the advantage of ſociety.

Is it not true that electricity, and all the prodigies it has hitherto diſcovered, have only ſerved to excite curioſity? Is it not true that the doctrine of attraction and gravity has done nothing more than aſtoniſh the imagination? Is it not true that all the operations of chemiſtry are in the ſame predicament? But are robbers leſs numerous, or contractors leſs covetous? Are guardians become more ſcrupulous? Is there leſs envy, and is the hard heart become compaſſionate? Of what benefit will modern diſcoveries be to ſociety, ſhould philoſophy neglect morality and manners, concerning which the ancients employed their whole powers?

I cannot addreſs theſe reflections, which I have long had at heart, to a better perſon than one who is at preſent the Atlas of modern philoſophy; and who, by his example and his writings, might reſtore the ancient virtue of the Greeks and Romans, and render to philoſophy its former luſtre.

On which I pray God, &c.

LET-

LETTER XXVIII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, January 29, 1768.

I HAVE received and read, with the utmoſt ſenſibility, the eulogium which your majeſty has compoſed, on the young and worthy prince whom you have had the misfortune to loſe. The work is equally honourable to the mind and ſentiments of the hero by whom it is written. Virtue and eloquence weep for virtue and talents cut off in their bloom. The reader cannot avoid adding his tears to thoſe of your majeſty, while peruſing a work ſo affecting and full of pathos. The only paſſage which I could have wiſhed not to have met with, though the moſt affecting, the moſt pathetic of the whole, is that in which your majeſty ſpeaks of your approaching end. I know, ſire, that a hero like you conſiders this laſt moment with tranquillity: yet I cannot but think your majeſty ought to veil ſo afflicting an image, from the eyes of thoſe who are tenderly and reſpectfully attached to you. Happily for their ſenſibility, a moment ſo painful appears to them more diſtant than it does to your majeſty. Of this they even flatter

themſelves they will not have the grief of being witneſſes. While reading this mournful and eloquent peroration, I, from the bottom of my heart, addreſſed thoſe beautiful lines from the ſeventeenth ode of the ſecond book of Horace to your majeſty, in which the poet intreated Mæcenas to ſuſpend the complaints which the ſight of approaching death drew from the favourite of Auguſtus: with this difference, that your majeſty is of much more precious value to the world than Mæcenas was; that he feared death, which you have a thouſand times braved; and that my ſentiments are more profound, and more juſt, than thoſe of Horace.

However eloquent the deſcription may be, of which I venture to complain to your majeſty, I would rather, for your ſake and my own, read the philoſophic gaiety with which you treat ſubjects of philoſophy themſelves, at the ſame time that you make remarks both juſt and profound. Excellent reflections may for example be made, of this kind, on the proceſſion which our holy father the Pope has lately ordained; becauſe the catholic religion has the misfortune no longer to be able to oppreſs, and perſecute, the Diſſidents, in Poland. This, it muſt be owned, is proclaiming the ſpirit of the catholic religion

very adroitly, and affording excellent ſport to its enemies.

Your majeſty is pleaſed to treat the ſublime geometry a little cavalierly. I allow that it frequently is, as your majeſty well obſerves, a luxury in which idle learning indulges: but to prove that it has often been uſeful we need only recollect the ſyſtem of the world, the phænomena of which it ſo well explains. Not but I allow, with your majeſty, that morality is ſtill more intereſting, and more eſpecially deſerving the ſtudy of philoſophers. The misfortune is, it is every where mingled with religion, which has done it much injury.

I hear that M. de Caſtillon, the younger, has not the place of aſtronomer, which has been given to M. Bernouilli. The latter is, no doubt, a very proper perſon, but I take the freedom again to recommend the other to your majeſty's bounty. If you would deign to appoint him aſſiſtant to his father, in aſtronomy, and add the penſion of which he is in want, this eſtimable family would be under eternal obligations to you.

May you, ſire, long write works like that which I have juſt read; on condition that their ſubject be not equally mournful, and particularly that the concluſion may not be ſo afflicting to your faithful ſervants. In theſe ſentiments,

ments, and with the moſt profound reſpect, I ſhall, till the laſt ſigh, remain, &c.

LETTER XXIX.

From the King.

March 24, 1768.

THE eulogium you received was leſs written from a ſpirit of oſtentation than from the love of truth. I can aſſure you the talent of the orator was but ſmall, and that the unanimous teſtimony of his auditors naturally freed the author from that accuſation. But I ſhall wave a ſubject too gloomy to be longer dwelt upon. I congratulate philoſophers on the recent follies of the Grand Lama*. Scarcely could all your prayers have prevailed on Heaven to have inſpired him with more ſilly thoughts. He reſembles an old rope-dancer, who, although aged and infirm, attempts to repeat his former capers, falls, and breaks his neck. The thunder of excommunication has long grown ruſty in the Vatican. Why take it from the arſenal to hurl it, with an impotent arm, at a time like the preſent; when

* Meaning the pope. T.

the maſter is as much out of credit as his earthly vicar; when reaſon proudly rejects all myſtic and unintelligible jargon; when the vulgar themſelves are leſs abſurd than their governors formerly were; and when ſovereigns, by their own authority, aboliſh the order of the Jeſuits, who ſerved as the body-guards of popery?

You will ſee that the Pope will be as ill treated, at Paris, as the philoſophers; and that the eternal father of Verſailles will take the gallantry of the holy ſee to his grandſon * very ill. Be theſe prophecies accompliſhed or be they not, I ſhall have the conſolation of another excommunicated comrade, which is a thing the more amuſing becauſe it is the firſt event of the kind which has happened in my time.

I have ſeen an epiſtle, in which poor Marmontel charitably wiſhes a female ſtage-dancer ſhould enjoy ſalvation. It ſhould ſeem that the cenſures of the Sorbonne have not yet been able to correct him of the horrible vice of toleration! As he is deſirous every body ſhould be ſaved, I hope he will make a generous effort in favour of the duke of Parma and me, ſo that Marmontel, the duke of Parma, the dancer and

* The duke of Parma, infanta of Spain. T.

I may

I may proceed immediately to Paradiſe, in deſpite of the Sorbonne and the Pope.

I hear that you are buſy in making additions to your works, of which I am very glad; for no perſon writes a more clear and intelligible ſtyle than you do on the abſtract parts of geometry.

We hear little at preſent of Voltaire. Letters from Switzerland ſay he is buſy writing a work intended for the empreſs of Ruſſia. I know not what this can mean. He may compoſe a new code of laws for the Poles, Tartars, or Perſians.

I have had a ſucceſſion of illneſs, by which I have been much incommoded. But who has not the ſame? We are told it is for the exerciſe of our patience. I wiſh your health was no longer liable to try your patience, and that your body, as healthy as your mind, might not reſemble thoſe ſcabbards which, according to the proverb, are cut through by the ſword. If it can be any conſolation to you, I would have you know there are perſons who are ſincerely intereſted in your preſervation, and in every thing which can be of advantage to you.

On which I pray God, &c.

LETTER XXX.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, April 15, 1768.

I HAVE already had the honour to return your majeſty my very humble thanks, for the beautiful eulogium you were kind enough to ſend me; and to inform you how eloquent and pathetic the work appeared to me to be. Every perſon of feeling who has read it has been equally affected; and all offer up prayers that nature may add, to the days of the auguſt orator, thoſe which ſhe cut off from the life of his illuſtrious nephew, ſo worthy to be thus celebrated.

If any thing can equal this eloquent work, it will be the excellent reflections your majeſty has made, on the excommunication of the duke of Parma. The compariſon you have drawn, between the Grand Lama and a rope dancer, who, old and infirm, wiſhes to repeat his youthful capers and breaks his neck, is as juſt and philoſophic as it is pleaſant. It is repeated from mouth to mouth, and is of more worth than all the long memorials of the council of Spain, or the parliament of Paris, on this fine ſubject.

The excommunicated Marmontel, to whom

I read

I read the paſſage, in your majeſty's letter, which regards himſelf, has charged me to ſay that Paradiſe, Purgatory, Limbo, or Hell itſelf, are indifferent to him; provided he has but the honour of being in either place one of your majeſty's attendants.

I know not whether Voltaire be or be not excommunicated, but he does not ſuppoſe himſelf ſo to be; for he has kept Eaſter with great pomp, in his manor-church of Ferney; and, after the ceremony, preached an excellent ſermon, againſt thieving, to his peaſantry. He pretends he is ruined, and conſequently has cleared his houſe, even of his niece, whom he has ſent to Paris. He remains alone, in company with a Jeſuit* named father Adam, who cannot, he ſays, be called *the firſt of men*. He affirms that his ſerene highneſs, the duke of Wirtemberg, is greatly in his debt, and is an ill pay-maſter; and would be apt to ſay, of this prince, as an Italian painter did to your majeſty, when I was preſent, who had worked for him without being paid—"He is a man "who does not love virtou†."

* *Seul*, avec un Jeſuit.

† So ſpelt in French to imitate the Italian pronunciation, *virtoò*, of the word virtu, which ſignifies either virtue, taſte, or knowledge. T.

Your majeſty infinitely flatters me, by wiſhing for a new volume of my works. I have ſome materials, for ſuch a volume; but I know not whether my poor head will permit me to put them together. I ſhall leave it in repoſe, for a year; and, to kill time in the mean while, ſhall print two volumes of algebraic ſcrawls, which have been written theſe two years, but which are but little intereſting either to your majeſty or me.

The counteſs de Boufflers-Rouverel, a lady of great wit and merit, and whom the late madame de Pompadour, of happy memory, hated, becauſe of her admiration of your majeſty, has deſired me to recommend the count de Boufflers, her ſon, a prudent, well-educated, well-informed youth, who will very ſoon arrive at Berlin, and who is to be preſented to your majeſty, by the Engliſh ambaſſador. This young lord deſerves to be diſtinguiſhed, for his conduct and knowledge, from the generality of our French youth of quality.

I flatter myſelf that the return of fine weather, and exerciſe, will reſtore your majeſty to perfect health. I am not aſtoniſhed you have ſuffered, during the ſevere winter we have had, and hope you are at preſent better. May you long be preſerved, by fate, for the good of your kingdom,

dom, the example of Europe, and for the honour and advantage of letters and philoſophy.

I am, with the moſt profound reſpect, &c.

LETTER XXXI.

From the King.

May 7, 1768.

A GOD, favourable to philoſophers, has ſent a giddy and a lying ſpirit, inſtead of the Holy Spirit, to our ſanctified father the Pope; which has inſpired him with mighty errors, and extravagant enterpriſes. It is ſaid that, with uplifted arm, he is about to hurl his thunder againſt the moſt Chriſtian, moſt Catholic, and moſt Faithful Kings. You will find he will ſoon adopt the Defender of the Faith, and the heretical philoſopher of Sans Souci, that he may not be alone, and without attendants. Poſterity will be ſurpriſed to learn what giants the Pope has dared to excommunicate. He certainly merits that theſe ſacred majeſties ſhould pelt him with apples. What he has refuſed them does not, in reality, merit to be aſked. A good leg of mutton is more nutritive than all the fleſh that is virginally divine. I know not what will be the

the reſult of the buſineſs. We muſt look up to this old rope-dancer, at whom you laughed, to know how he will retreat, after the ſtep in advance which he has taken.

Be it as it may, the conſequence will be favourable to philoſophy paſt contradiction. On one part, we ſhall ſee to what extravagance the ſyſtem of inſpiration can lead men; and, on the other, what the degree of wiſdom will be, which the preciſe and rigorous arguments of philoſophy ſhall produce. Here, the pride and ambition of the prieſt, who wiſhes to trample on crowns; there, enlightened reaſon, which protects and defends the legitimate power of monarchs. On the one hand, the turbulent conſequences of an abſurd religion; and, on the other, thoſe who riſe and exclaim againſt monſtrous abuſes. In fine, it will be impoſſible any longer to maintain a theſis, on a ſubject which diſplays its own dangerous folly.

Yet, ſay you, Marmontel and the Encyclopediſts ſuffer perſecution: to which I anſwer, there are every where factions, cabals, perſonal enmity, jealouſy, and party quarrels; which take arms on the moſt frivolous pretences, to gratify individual hatred and the deſire of vengeance. But, ſhould the moſt Chriſtian king be excommunicated, he will turn philoſopher; you will become

come his firſt almoner; Diderot will be confeſſor to Choiſeul, and Marmontel to the Dauphin: all preſentations will be yours; you will beſtow an archbiſhopric on Voltaire, a biſhopric on Jean Jacques, and an abbey on D'Argens, and affairs will be but the better conducted.

There has been a great uproar at Ferney, the occaſion of which is not known. The patriarch has driven Hagar from his manſion, has taken the ſacrament, has cauſed a certificate of it to be drawn up, and has ſent it to Verſailles; a certain ſign of ſome new perſecution. But, as all the world knows to what extent he carries the fervor of the faith, he will no doubt eſcape the calumny of the envious.

I wiſh to ſee your health re-eſtabliſhed, and your courage as triumphant over artifice as your reaſon is over error. Remember that Galileo was worſe treated than you have been; that Deſcartes was baniſhed his country; that Bayle was obliged to fly; that Michael Servetus was burnt; and that the aſhes of all thoſe who have in like manner been burnt, in ſo good a cauſe, would form mountains as high as Mount Martyr, could they be collected. Farewel. I recommend peace of mind as the firſt cauſe of health of body. It is good while philoſophiſing to enlighten others, but we muſt not forget our-

ſelves; watch therefore for your own preſervation, in which I more than any one intereſt myſelf.

On which I pray God, &c.

LETTER XXXII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, June 20, 1768.

I DEMAND pardon of your majeſty, and acknowledge your ſuperiority in politics as in every thing elſe; but I do not perceive all the advantages for unfortunate philoſophy which you foreſee, in the follies with which it has pleaſed the Holy Spirit to inſpire the Grand Lama. I only expect our ſanctified father ſhould receive, from his moſt dear children, the catholic princes, ſome kicks in the belly or the breech, as it ſhall beſt pleaſe your majeſty. But I do not hope any philoſopher ſhould become either grand almoner or confeſſor. While waiting for the good which your majeſty ſo kindly predicts, they will continue to be vilified and perſecuted. The firſt they would patiently ſuffer, might the ſecond only be omitted; and, were but their enemies

enemies to forbear blows, they would willingly ſay, like Soſia in Amphitryon—

——Pour des injures,
Dis m'en tant que tu voudras.
Ce ſont légères bleſſures,
Et je ne m'en fache pas *.

Be this as it may, the eldeſt ſon of the church has lately, with all poſſible reſpect, ſeized on Avignon, by ſending, not an army, but a detachment from the parliament of Aix, who have taken poſſeſſion in red robes, and with great politeneſs. We make war on the Pope with ſword in ſcabbard, and pen in hand; but, in revenge, we are ready to throw philoſophers into the fire, on the firſt given ſignal.

I moſt humbly thank your majeſty, for the intereſt you take in my health. The ſhell of the machine is ſomewhat better, at this moment; but the mind ſtill remains incapable of application, for want of ſleep. I have lately had the affliction to ſee myſelf two hundred leagues nearer your majeſty, and yet to want ſtrength to go and throw myſelf at your feet. M. Mettra, who is departed for Berlin, and whom I am not permitted to accompany, becauſe of the regimen to which I am obliged to ſubject myſelf, will

* Abuſe me as much as you pleaſe—words are but wind.

kindly

kindly be the interpreter of my ſentiments and regret.

Yes; the patriarch of Ferney has indubitably driven Hagar from his dwelling, and has no ſociety, except the company of a very good-natured Jeſuit, who calls himſelf father Adam, but who, as Voltaire ſays, is not the firſt of men. He entertains this Jeſuit to ſay maſs, and play at cheſs. I continually fear leſt the prieſt ſhould play the philoſopher a trick, ſhould make a pawn a queen, and at laſt give him check-mate.

It is ſaid that the biſhop of Geneva, or Annecy, one of whoſe flock he has the honour to be, intended to excommunicate him, for having taken the ſacrament at Eaſter. Fortunately, at the moment when miſchief was plotting, Voltaire ſent him a fine conſecrated loaf; and the prieſt, for whom there was an excellent cake, pleaded the cauſe of his pariſhioner, and maintained that his act of communion was no farce, but that he was in the moſt holy of all poſſible tempers. As for him, I imagine he was not ſo ceremonious, but that he, like Pourceaugnac to his phyſicians, who inſiſted on feeling his pulſe to know whether he ought to eat, exclaimed—"Why all this reaſoning, before "one takes a morſel?"

I per-

I perceive I abuſe the time and kindneſs of your majeſty, by retailing ſuch wretched nonſenſe. I aſk pardon, and intreat you would preſerve yourſelf for the happineſs of your ſubjects, the example of Europe, and the good of philoſophy and letters. I hope M. Mettra will bring good news reſpecting your health, and will bear witneſs to your majeſty of the inviolable attachment, gratitude, admiration, and moſt profound reſpect, with which I am, &c.

P. S. I have juſt read *The Profeſſion of Faith of the Theiſts*, which ſeems to me addreſſed to your majeſty. It is an Eaſter offering from Ferney.

LETTER XXXIII.

From the King.

Auguſt 4, 1768.

I PERCEIVE your attachment to philoſophy is ſuperior to all the temptations of fortune. You will not hire yourſelf to a court, were it even in quality of caſuiſt, whoſe office it ſhould be to make algebraic equations of the ſins of the ſovereign, and the pains and penalties incurred. You prefer your philoſophic retreat to the pomp of grandeur, and, more ſage than

than Plato, no Dionyſius can induce you to abandon contemplation, and enter the vortex of frivolity. This is the repoſe which Epicurus ſo much recommends to his diſciples, which is in ſo little eſtimation in your country, but which that philoſopher conſidered as the ſovereign good. There is a certain marquis, here, powerfully imbued with this doctrine, which he carries ſo far as not to allow himſelf to move. Could he live without the circulation of the blood, he would prefer that mode to the one in which he at preſent exiſts. For my part, as I live to pleaſe every body, I take care to afford him no contradiction. I have even thought, ſince Jean Jacques has ſucceſsfully brought paradoxes into faſhion, I ſhould not do ill to be of the party of thoſe authors who, embelliſhing their works by fine phraſes, have renounced the fooliſh frenzy of retaining common ſenſe.

I ſend you a charming diſſertation, which I have written in praiſe of indolence. You will there find the ſurface of erudition and that ſuperficial profundity which, in the preſent age, cannot but ſecure fame to the work. It has reconciled me to the marquis, and I have no doubt but that your loungers of Paris will think me a deep logician. If you or your friends have any paradox to prove, I will undertake to acquit myſelf to their ſatisfaction; being perſuaded

this is the only way left to obtain permanent fame.

In the mean time, here follow ſome ſubjects to treat on which I have materials ready prepared. —That the ſociety of the Jeſuits is uſeful to ſtates —That philoſophers ſhould be baniſhed monarchical governments, after the example of the Roman emperors, by whom aſtrologers and phyſicians were expelled Rome—That there are more men of genius, of every kind, in our age than in the paſt—That ſuperſtition enlightens the mind—That the kingdoms in which the ſubject is the pooreſt are the moſt rich; becauſe the vulgar are a prudent race, and have no wants—That poets are poiſoners—That contradictory laws are uſeful to ſtates, becauſe they exerciſe the ſagacity of judges—That frivolity is ſuperior to good ſenſe; becauſe frivolity is light and good ſenſe heavy—That we muſt act firſt and reflect afterward; becauſe ſuch is every where the practice.

I ſhould never end, were I to communicate the various themes I have in reſerve. Inſtead of all theſe fine things, I wiſh I had the ſecret to impart ſtrength to your nerves, and to repair the caſe that contains your ſoul; that it might live more at its eaſe, and, diſengaged from the

infirmities of matter, might philoſophiſe with greater tranquillity.

On which I pray God, &c.

LETTER XXXIV.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, Sept. 16, 1768.

WHATEVER praiſes your majeſty may beſtow on indolence, in the charming work you have done me the honour to ſend me, I intreat you would not believe it is this virtue, ſince ſo you are pleaſed to call it, which prevented me from ſooner returning my very humble thanks. A ſenſation more melancholy, and more profound, occupied my heart, and ſilenced every other. There have been very diſagreeable and ſerious rumours, concerning the health of your majeſty. I impatiently waited to receive certain intelligence from M. Mettra, with which to calm my inquietude. At length he is arrived, has reſtored me to perfect peace, and enabled me again to aſſure your majeſty of the gratitude, attachment, and reſpect I feel.

With

With reſpect to the work in which your majeſty praiſes, with ſo much wit and pleaſantry, that indolence which you practiſe ſo little, I have the honour to aſſure you that indigeſtion and want of ſleep have long perſuaded me of the truth of this theſis, and have convinced me that Rouſſeau was right when he affirmed that —*Reflective man is a depraved animal.* I believe the marquis as well convinced of this axiom as I am; nor can I accuſe him of activity, of any kind, except in his inviolable and reſpectful attachment to your majeſty.

We need but caſt a look on what is paſſing in Europe, to perceive that the human ſpecies is condemned never to quit its natural indolence, except to the torment of itſelf and others. Of this I wiſh no other example than your friend the Grand Turk, who is marching againſt Ruſſia, for the ſupport no doubt of the catholic religion. Our holy father, the Pope, certainly was in no expectation of ſuch an ally.

I ſhould be very happy to ſee the ſubjects which your majeſty propoſes treated by you; and, among others, the two following—That philoſophers ſhould be baniſhed monarchical governments—And, that the kingdoms in which the ſubject is the pooreſt are the moſt rich; becauſe the vulgar are a prudent race, and have no

wants.—This is a truth which men endeavour to prove, by experiment, in moſt of the kingdoms of the earth. Happy that country which has the good fortune not to be thus far enlightened, concerning its real intereſt!

Preſerve your precious health, ſire, for ſubjects who will never hear ſuch inſtructions from you; preſerve it for philoſophy, for letters, and for the happineſs of him who will all his life remain, with the moſt profound reſpect, &c.

LETTER XXXV.

From the King.

October 4, 1768.

I DID not imagine I ſhould become the chief of a ſect, when I ſent you that ſportive effuſion on indolence; and I plume myſelf highly indeed, on having philoſophers for diſciples. Not that I attribute ſuch converſion to the force of my arguments. We muſt be juſt, and allow that, after having extended the fancy through every metaphyſical reſearch, after having ſeen the boundaries of all things, or rather thoſe limits which human faculties cannot paſs,

we may indulge ourſelves in indolence of mind, reſpecting thoſe ſecrets of nature which man will never decypher.

It is equally true that human life is a childiſh game, at which one ragged boy ſets up what another has knocked down; or deſtroys that which others have built; in which ſome tyros, more reſtleſs and ardent than the crowd, diſturb the peace of ſociety; and hungry ſcullions run away with the meat from their comrades, leaving them nothing but the bones. Were ſuch hair-brained gentry born indolent, I do not believe ſociety would ſuffer any loſs.

I do not, however, range the Grand Turk in this diviſion; he has not yet ſufficiently learned his catechiſm, to ſquabble in behalf of the porter of paradiſe. He is ſatisfied with defending his frontiers, againſt the incurſions of the Hungarians; and has ſent troops to Montenero, in conjunction with the Venetians, to reduce the rebels to obedience.

The works which you require from me will be in no ſuch haſte to appear. I intend that which I call—The Club of Deſpotiſm to knock down Reaſon—for your country. It ſhall appear at the very moment when I become a candidate for a place in the French academy; and, as it muſt be orthodox, and ſpeak your language

in all its purity, this book, which will be a proof of my zeal againſt philoſophers, will be a ſubſtitute for all which Vaugelas or D'Olivet could teach me.

The book on the utility of poverty, proved by politics and religion, ſhall appear at Vienna; unleſs M. Van Swieten ſhould put it in his index *. This work I am convinced will perſuade the ſubjects of her majeſty, the empreſs queen, that the money of the ſtate is only for the ſovereign; and that, while the people remain poor, they remain virtuous: witneſs the Spartans; witneſs the Romans, during the times of their firſt conſuls; and that, in fine, the rich do not inherit the kingdom of heaven. This paradox, proved, will be equivalent to the family compact formed between the powers of the ſouth. It will be the olive-branch of peace between Pruſſia and Auſtria, and I ſhall be canonized by the farmers of finance.

You will perceive my plans are not confined to trifles, and that my works will be of more value to me than the dictionary of Bayle to his editors. Nay, perhaps I ſhall riſe to the ſtandard of Henry VIII. whoſe theological olio procured him the ineſtimable title of Defender of the Faith.

* An index, or liſt, of books, is kept at Rome, which the people are forbidden to read: perhaps ſome ſuch index is kept at Vienna. T.

The

The gout, my travels, and my employments, have ſomewhat delayed theſe important labours. My health, in which you ſo affectionately intereſt yourſelf, is at preſent tolerably reſtored. Nature has condemned me periodically to collect matter, during three years, which accumulated and brought to maturity produces the gout. It cannot be called ill treatment to be ſubject only once in three years to a fit of ſickneſs. The patience of kings ought to be exerciſed as well as that of private perſons, for they are moulded of the ſame clay. We muſt make ourſelves familiar with the idea of diſſolution, and prepare to return to the boſom of that nature from which we ſprang.

My marquis, to prove he is not indolent, has undertaken a journey to Aix; for you know the people of Provence are like the Jews; the dirt of Jeruſalem is to the latter what the mineral waters of Aix are to the former, and ſeem to them the perfection of the works of the Moſt High. I have the misfortune not to have the ſame kind of predilection for the ſands of Brandenburg, and believe it poſſible to be a good patriot without overflowing with prejudices in favour of my own country.

The Swiſs have made a drawing of Voltaire doing penance, and going to confeſſion; which is the moſt pleaſant idea the gentlemen of the

thirteen cantons have conceived ſince the flood. Voltaire is repreſented with his roſary in his hand, eſcorted by his game keepers, and followed by father Adam, his cook, and his coachman. A monkey bears the crucifix before him, and the aſs of the maid of Orleans follows after, cocking his tail, under which the pamphlets he is continually printing drop; particularly a ſhort poem againſt your friends of Geneva. Let us place this among harmleſs follies, and wiſh men might never be guilty of any worſe.

May you live in peace, entirely recover your health, and remain perfectly perſuaded that no perſon intereſts himſelf more than I do in behalf of letters, good ſenſe, and philoſophy.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER XXXVI.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, December 19, 1768.

I FEAR leſt I ſhould importune your majeſty too often, and for that reaſon dare not make my letters more numerous. I particularly reſpect the many affairs in which you muſt be engaged

engaged at this moment, which cannot but be increaſed by thoſe of the north. Were they not ſo ſerious, the latter might for a moment amuſe a philoſopher. It is curious enough to ſee the Grand Turk in arms for the ſupport of the catholic religion in Poland, while the catholic princes of the ſouth very civilly curtail the patrimony of St. Peter.

I have no doubt, ſire, that the holy father will ſend the grand vizir a conſecrated ſword, as he did to marſhal Daun. It is ſaid that ſeveral of our French, and even the knights of Malta, are going to ſerve in the Turkiſh army, againſt the vile ſchiſmatics of Ruſſia. Who then ſhall hereafter affirm that the ſpirit of toleration makes no progreſs, in France?

The king of Denmark, whom we have had here during ſix weeks, departed eight days ago, wearied and haraſſed to exceſs, by feaſts at which he was ſqueezed to death, ſuppers at which he neither ate nor ſpoke, and balls at which he danced, yawning till he had ſet his mouth awry. I have no doubt that, on his arrival at Copenhagen, he will iſſue an edict to forbid ſuppers and balls in perpetuity. He viſited the academy of ſciences, and I pronounced a ſhort diſcourſe on the occaſion, which I have the honour to ſend your majeſty. My

aſſociates,

aſſociates, and the public, have appeared to be ſatisfied with it; but I require ſomething more; I wiſh it ſhould prove worthy of your approbation. I have endeavoured to make philoſophy ſpeak with ſuitable dignity; and this was the more neceſſary becauſe the king of Denmark had been aſſured that philoſophers were but bad company. This bad company, ſire, is intirely conſoled, and highly honoured, by having your majeſty at its head.

It is ſaid that the indolent marquis has ſtopped in Burgundy; he will, no doubt, make the waters of Aix come to him, till he can determine to go to the waters.

We receive ſome edifying pamphlets from Geneva. A few days ſince the A. B. C. was ſent us; which is a ſucceſſion of dialogues, concerning all which has been, is, and is to come. In the laſt dialogue, the author ſuſpects there may be a God, and yet that the world may be eternal. He ſpeaks like a man who does not know very well what he is talking of; and I believe he would willingly ſay, like the Swiſs captain to a deſerter who was going to be hanged, and who aſked him if there were another world,—"By heaven, friend, I would "give a hundred crowns to know."

But I detain your majeſty too long with triſles,

and

and conclude by wiſhing the next year may be as glorious and fortunate as all your preceding years have been, and by intreating you would continue your kindneſs to a philoſopher whoſe heart overflows with gratitude, attachment, and the moſt profound reſpect for your perſon. Theſe are the ſentiments in which during life, &c.

LETTER XXXVII.

From the King.

January 16, 1769.

I SHOULD have anſwered your letter ſooner, had I not been perplexed by affairs of various kinds. I begin by thanking you for your academical oration, included in your letter, and for your complimentary good wiſhes. I can very ſincerely aſſure you that I am well ſatisfied with your oration. It is written with great dignity; you praiſe yet do not flatter the king of Denmark, and exhauſt every ſubject Denmark can afford to ſay ſomething to its advantage. The ſtyle is ſimple and noble. The

only ſimile you have uſed is applied to the czar Peter I. which is ſtrong, well adapted, and picturesque. I have read other diſcourſes, and even poetry, on the ſame ſubject, but, without flattery, I can aſſure you this of yours is ſuperior to all I have ſeen on the ſubject.

We ſhall have no more news from France of the king of Denmark, he being departed; but there is an article of information from the obſervatory of Paris, which, if it be confirmed, will afford employment to the learned, and furniſh a ſubject to aſtrologers. We are told that one of the old ſatellites of Saturn has diſappeared. Let me intreat you, who are an inhabitant of the firmament, to inform me what is become of it. Is it devoured by Saturn? Is it in diſgrace? Or is it hid under ſome cloud, only to laugh at aſtronomers? The aſtrologers, without waiting for confirmation of the phenomenon, will boldly announce the fall of the favourite of ſome great prince; or they will maintain that the reign of Saturn will again recommence, and that he has ſent the loſt ſatellite to be incarnated, like Somonocadon, after which it will appear at the head of the Turkiſh or Ruſſian army, to reeſtabliſh his reign.

For my own part, I content myſelf with continually exclaiming, "If you catch him, good

"gentle-

" gentlemen, be ſo civil as not to bring him to " the gallows."

Your aſtronomers of Verſailles will ſay that the ſatellite has deſcended to earth for the conqueſt of Corſica, which the generals and armies of Louis XV. are unable to effect. In fine, the reſult of all theſe conjectures is that Saturn, during the preſent year, will afford us ſufficient employment.

Old as I am, I have read the A. B. C. of Voltaire, and can anſwer that he neither knows nor underſtands the A. B. C. of Hugo Grotius, and that probably he has never read Hobbes; this is pedantic, becauſe it is profound. The judgment he paſſes on Monteſquieu is better than the reſt. I am afraid he is in the right. The remainder of the work contains nothing but jokes and pleaſantries, ſcattered according to his manner. He believes the world to be eternal, and alleges the weakeſt reaſons. He wiſhes to doubt of a God, but is afraid of a faggot. One of his beſt remarks is that in which he wiſhes kings, inſtead of ſetting their armies to fight, would fight themſelves. As Voltaire maintains no army, I have ſome inclination to ſend him a well-tempered ſcymitar, that he may terminate his quarrel with Freron. I ſhould be pleaſed to ſee them tilt in a cloſe field, which certainly

certainly would be better than abuſing each other. For this year paſt I have received nothing from Voltaire.

The dear Iſaac is now doſeing himſelf with the muſtard of Dijon, which perhaps is as good as the waters of Aix. I know not when he will return home. Perhaps he will appoint himſelf hiſtoriographer to the ſatellite of Saturn, that he may write its itinerary, and publiſh its adventures.

Write to me whenever you have an inclination, but do not think it ſtrange if my anſwers are not equally prompt. Theſe curſed allies of your Lord's vicegerent* afford us employment. When our neighbour's houſe is on fire, our firſt care ought to be to look that the conflagration does not reach our own.

LETTER XXXVIII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, April 10, 1769.

I IMAGINED I perceived, from the laſt letter your majeſty did me the honour to write to me, that you were at that moment more than

* The pope.

uſually

uſually buſy, and that you had little time to beſtow on uſeleſs correſpondents. This reaſon, added to my own ill health, occaſioned me to forbear importuning you with any of my letters; not to mention that my chief motive for writing is to gain information of your health; and your miniſter, the baron von Goltz, aſſures me it is very good. May it ſo remain, for the happineſs of your ſubjects, and my conſolation, while my own is on the decline.

I was much affected by the accident which has happened to the princeſs of Naſſau; as well for herſelf as from the intereſt which your majeſty takes, in all that concerns her. Happy as you are in ſucceſs and fame, that is if fame can give happineſs, I earneſtly wiſh your majeſty might alſo be happy in your family; but perfect or durable felicity is incompatible with man, and he is the moſt fortunate who has the leaſt reaſon to be diſſatisfied with life.

The aſtronomers of the academy muſt before this have relieved your majeſty of your fears, on the pretended derangement of the affairs of Saturn, and the elopement of his ſatellite. The planets have more prudence than we have, they remain in their proper ſphere: men only have the madneſs to range, and torment themſelves, in ſearch of wretchedneſs.

The

The conflagration has burſt out at both ends of Europe, in Corſica and Ruſſia. Heaven grant it may not ſpread! Heaven grant it may not extend to France and your majeſty's provinces! I learn from the public papers that the Tartars have already committed great devaſtations. The misfortunes of men are to me the cauſe of affliction, however diſtant the ſcene of action may be.

The emperor and the cardinals are very buſy, at Rome, in appointing the aforeſaid Lord's vicegerent, while the Turk is as buſy for the defence of the catholic religion in Poland. I know not what pilot they will chooſe for the bark of St. Peter, but it ſeems to me to be exceedingly leaky; and Voltaire appears to be a ſhark that is making every effort to overſet the crazy veſſel. It is ſaid, however, that he this year intends to eat his God, as he did laſt; but it is alſo ſaid that his prieſt will not hear him confeſs.

We have no work here which can intereſt your majeſty, except the poem of the Seaſons, by M. de St. Lambert. I know not what your opinion will be, but, if I do not miſtake, you will there find what you love to find in poetry; harmony, imagery, philoſophy, and feeling.

Your majeſty is, no doubt, ignorant, for you have

have not time to read rhapſodies and libels, that there is a gazette publiſhed in your ſtates, at Cleves, under the title of *Courier du Bas Rhin*, in which calumnies have been inſerted againſt the moſt worthy people, and in particular againſt me. M. de Catt is in the ſecret of this impoſture, and can give an account of it to your majeſty.

I am, with the moſt profound reſpect, and admiration equal to my gratitude, &c.

LETTER XXXIX.

From the King.

April 22, 1769.

DO not imagine, my dear D'Alembert, that the Sarmatians, or the people of the Eaſt, diſturb my peace ſo much as to render me unable to anſwer the letters of philoſophers, who maintain peace, in ſpite of the wars of Podolia and Corſica, or of the troubles which you mad Frenchmen excite in Sweden. We have nothing to fear from any power, becauſe we are in friendſhip with all, and I imagine that the Gallic frontiers of the country of the Celts have

nothing to apprehend from the incurſions of the Tartars and Coſſacks. Thus our principal wiſhes are accompliſhed.

With reſpect to myſelf, I ſhall ſay to you, my dear D'Alembert, as prince Eugene did to Carelli, phyſician of Charles VI.—"My diſeaſe "is a ſorry raſcal, and is leading me to the "grave." It is age gradually mining the conſtitution, feeding on my vitals, and conducting me to the country in which Achilles and Therſites, Virgil and Mævius, Newton and Wiberius are all equals.

I am glad to receive good news from you relative to the affairs of heaven, which are in your department. I wiſh thoſe of earth and ſea proceeded as well; but, by living in the world, we learn to be ſatisfied with a little; and it is ſome conſolation to a man of honour to be informed, when the things of this little earth all are turned topſy-turvy, that thoſe of the milky way are orderly and ſane. As to our little heap of mud, you perceive how monarchs wade through it to gain information. You have enjoyed the beatific viſion of the king of Denmark, at Paris; and it is but juſt that Rome ſhould enjoy that of the emperor, who is ſomething higher in worth than this northern monarch. He is the firſt emperor, ſince the age of the lower empire,

empire, whom that capital of the world has received within its walls, unaccompanied by a cavalcade of conquerors. He has given very ſage inſtructions to the cardinals aſſembled in conclave, which it is to be hoped they will follow. But, apparently, the Holy Ghoſt is alſo on his travels, and has paſſed through Madrid and Verſailles, to inſtruct the electors concerning the choice of the ſucceſſor of Cephas. It is alſo very probable a new pontiff will not be allowed to aſcend the throne, but on condition of totally ſuppreſſing the Jeſuits. I, for my own part, glory in preſerving their remains in Sileſia, and, heretic though I am, in not aggravating their misfortunes. Whoever, hereafter, would ſee a ſon of Ignatius, muſt be obliged to travel to Sileſia, the only province in which he will find relics of that order which, not long ſince, almoſt deſpotically governed the courts of Europe.

You will, for a time, be affected by the expulſion of the Jeſuits, in France; the education of your youth will, for ſome years, ſuffer. The misfortune will be the more ſenſibly felt, becauſe your literature is on the decline; and, among a hundred that appear, it is much when one good work can be diſcovered.

I am unacquainted with the poem of St. Lam-

bert which you mention, but I wait for it with that predilection in its favour to which your approbation inclines me.

I have no acquaintance with the gazette of the Lower Rhine, or with that of Holland; and ſtill leſs with the Paris gazette. I only know that one of your countrymen regularly ſcribbles two ſheets of paper a week, at Cleves, that people buy theſe ſheets, and that a fool of a writer always finds ſome one more fooliſh for a reader. But I ſcarcely can perſuade myſelf that an author of this claſs can be of any prejudice to your reputation. Alas! my good D'Alembert, were you king of England, your faithful ſubjects would exerciſe your patience in a very different manner. Had you read the number of publications which have been vended by your dear countrymen againſt me, during the war, you would laugh at this wretched newſmonger. I did not condeſcend to read all the productions of the hatred and envy of my enemies, but recollected the beautiful ode of Horace.——"Unſhaken by the aſſaults of fortune the ſage remains: the cruſh of worlds affects him not. Though to his feet earth ſhould refuſe ſupport, he is untroubled; though elements mingle in confuſion, he views the wild uproar with a countenance calm and ſerene. Strong in virtue,

"nothing

"nothing can affect, nothing can agitate his "mind. Misfortune and proſperity he con- "templates with the ſame indifference; laughs "at the clamours of the multitude, at the calum- "nies of the envious, and the perſecutions of "his foes; and, ſeeking refuge in himſelf, there "finds that ſweet ſerenity which merit and in- "nocence beſtow*."

Such, my good D'Alembert, is the advice which the ſuperannuated poet ſends the philoſopher. I ſhall however enquire concerning your complaint, and endeavour to give you ſatisfaction, which is the leaſt you can expect from me.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER XL.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, June 16, 1769.

YOUR majeſty gives me great pleaſure, in the laſt letter you have done me the honour to write, by aſſuring me that the blows which the

* The royal author has taken ſuch liberties with the Latin, that I have rather thought proper to tranſlate after him than after Horace. T.

Ruſſians and Turks deal to each other will not be retorted, either on the Pruſſians or the French. I know not, indeed, what your majeſty thinks of that learned and famous war, but hitherto it ſeems to me to reſemble the jeſts of Harlequin and Scapin, who menace each other with great noiſe, beſtow a few ſtrokes with their flat wooden ſwords, and then run off, each on his proper ſide. The moſt pleaſant part of the affair is to ſee the impotent and ſublime Porte become the protector of the popery of the Sarmatians. Indeed, no other idea than that of ridicule could be annexed to it, were it not for the effuſion of blood.

It is ſaid that the cordelier Pope, Ganganelli, does not intend to give the ſociety of Jeſus any ſugar-plumbs; but that St. Francis of Aſſiſe may chance to put St. Ignatius to death. It ſeems to me that the holy father, cordelier though he be, will be guilty of great folly, thus to cruſh his regiment of guards, in compliment to the catholic princes. I cannot but think this treaty reſembles that between the wolves and the ſheep, the firſt condition of which was that the latter ſhould give up their dogs. We know the conſequence.

It will certainly be very ſingular, while the moſt chriſtian, the moſt catholic, the moſt apoſtolic,

apoſtolic, and the moſt faithful kings are extirpating the grenadiers of the holy ſee, to obſerve your moſt heretical majeſty affording them protection and ſafety. True it is that, after having reſiſted a hundred thouſand Auſtrians, a hundred thouſand Ruſſians, and a hundred thouſand French, you muſt have become very timid indeed to be afraid of a ſingle hundred of black gowns; though I own that here, in France, they are more to be dreaded.

Voltaire, who wiſhes ſomething better than the deſtruction of the Jeſuits, as your majeſty well knows, has been ſo well ſatisfied with his paſchal communion of laſt year that it is ſaid he was determined this year to take, according to the proverb, a hair of the ſame dog. He has however a diſpute with the biſhop of Geneva, formerly a maſon as he pretends, and ſince a *porte-dieu* *, who wiſhes to have him burnt; but he tells me he has no vocation to martyrdom, and that he would not expoſe himſelf to the fate of the chevalier de la Barre. I anſwer him, in order to ſtrengthen his faith, that, according to St. Auguſtin, in his homily on the Decollation of St. John, a man when martyred is moſt proper for entering into the kingdom of

* A god-carrier; alluding to the hoſt. T.

heaven; becauſe the Goſpel ſays we muſt make ourſelves little, in order to enter this kingdom*, which being beheaded naturally produces.

I requeſt your majeſty would be perſuaded I ſhould not have troubled you with my complaints, relative to the detraction printed againſt me in your ſtates, had not this detraction been an attack upon my moral character, and had I not known that it had made ſome impreſſion, even at Berlin. Kings, ſire, and eſpecially kings like you, with good reaſon deſpiſe every kind of calumny; becauſe their actions, being evident to all the world, are able to give calumny the lie: but an obſcure individual has no ſuch reſource.

Two days ſince I viſited the ſtatuary Couſtou, to ſee the Mars and Venus on which he has been working for your majeſty. They are both beautiful; the Venus is intirely finiſhed, and the Mars will be immediately.

I had the honour to write a few days ſince to your majeſty, and to ſend you a work on Synonymes, which perhaps you have not yet received, and which the author deſired I would preſent to you.

* The reference I imagine is to the text in St. Luke—"He that is leaſt among you all ſhall be great." T.

I am

I am informed that M. de la Grange has been ill. Your majeſty ſhould command him not to labour too ſeverely. He is a man of very uncommon merit, whoſe preſervation is of importance to the academy, and who is well worthy of your majeſty's favour, for his talents, modeſty, and the propriety of his conduct. I, by experience, know the effects of long and inceſſant application; which are a decline of nature and premature old age. May the health of your majeſty, like your fame, never ſuffer decay.

I am, &c.

LETTER XLI.

From the King.

July 2, 1769.

YOU have your eyes continually fixed, my dear D'Alembert, on the warlike theologians who diſpute with ponderous ſabres in Poland. None of the hordes that fight under their banners have, I can aſſure you, read either the Inſtitutions of John Calvin or the Summa of St. Thomas. Heaven is about to decide between the Alcoran and the proceeding of the Holy Spirit from

from the Father and the Son. I will wager on the ſectaries of the latter opinion. What has hitherto paſſed, between theſe theological nations, can only be conſidered as the prelude to what is to happen, when the campaign begins. The grand vizir, at the head of orthodox catholics, is about to paſs the Danube. Prince Gallitzin, with his heretics, is advancing to combat them, at the paſſage of the Neiſter. They are preparing a fine banquet for Beelzebub; for the Sorbonne and Hell, or Hell and the Sorbonne, deal equal damnation to Mahometans and Greeks. What a fine poſſe of recruits will there be for his duſky majeſty, and his adherents! I have myſelf ſent ſo many to this country, in my own deſpite, that I may be allowed to be a ſpectator of thoſe whom his imperial majeſty of Conſtantinople, and her imperial majeſty of all the Ruſſias, expedite on their travels.

You Frenchmen do not proceed in the ſame manner, in Corſica: you depopulate the iſland more politely, but the fate of thoſe whom you ſend into the other world is different, from that of thoſe ſent thither by the Ruſſians and Turks; for whoever is killed, while fighting for Paoli and the liberty of his country, is a martyr, and a bird of Paradiſe. Your Choiſeul has ſnatched

Corſica as a cat claws cheſnuts from the fire; and, as he is adroit, he will not burn his fangs. It is affirmed that he has conceived a liking for Avignon, and the diſtrict of Venaiſſin. He proteſts to the Pope that his kingdom is not of this world; and the poor ultramontane Druid will be obliged to convince himſelf of the truth of the doctrine, if he can. The Holy Ghoſt has elected him conditionally. But what would you have him do? He has loſt his ideal credit, founded on the general ſtupidity of nations, and he will ſuppreſs the Jeſuits, as formerly one of his predeceſſors aboliſhed the order of the Templars; and the orthodox potentates and the vicar of Bar-Jonas will divide their ſpoils; while a poor little heretical prince, of a tolerant temper, affords an aſylum to the perſecuted.

What a picture might an able painter make of all theſe events! In one group he would depict you the mufti, recovering the cathedrals of the Poliſh biſhops; in another Ruſſian popes combating for the ſons of Calvin; and, in the back ground, a proteſtant prince protecting the Jeſuits, oppreſſed by their moſt catholic and moſt chriſtian majeſties; while St. Ambroſe, Luther, and the patriarch Phocyas, peeping out of a cloud, imagining they have weak eyes, are unable to comprehend the meaning of a ſpectacle

tacle ſo ſtrange. Were but the picture finiſhed, it ought to be hung up, as an ornament, in every mad-houſe in Europe.

But, pleaſantry apart, the edifice of the Roman church begins to moulder away, and is tottering with age. The wants of princes, who are in debt, make them deſirous of the wealth which pious fraud has accumulated, in monaſteries. Hungry after this wealth, they think only how to appropriate it to themſelves; and this is the whole of their policy. They do not perceive that, while deſtroying the trumpeters of ſuperſtition and fanaticiſm, they are ſapping the foundation of the building; that error will vaniſh; that zeal will grow lukewarm; and that faith, wanting food, will expire. A monk, contemptible in himſelf, can enjoy no other reſpect in the ſtate than that which ſhall be acquired him by prejudice, in favour of his holy function. He is fed by ſuperſtition, honoured by bigotry, and canoniſed by fanaticiſm. Thoſe towns in which there are moſt monaſteries always contain moſt ſuperſtition, and intolerance. Deſtroy theſe repoſitories of error, and you will dam up the ſprings of corruption, which ſupply prejudice, give credit to mother Gooſe's tales, and on occaſion produce other tales, equally true.

The

The biſhops, being moſt of them deſpiſed by the people, have not power enough over them ſtrongly to rouſe their paſſions; and the prieſts, who are very exact collectors of their tithes, are ſufficiently peaceful, and good citizens, not to trouble the order of ſociety.

The conſequence of all this is that ſovereigns, very affectionately attached to that acceſſary (wealth) which excites their cupidity, know not whither their own proceedings lead them. They think they act like politicians, while they are acting like philoſophers. Voltaire, it muſt be owned, has greatly contributed to ſmooth their road. He has been the precurſor of the revolution; and, by preparing the minds of men, that is, by pouring an inundation of ridicule on the cuculati, and on ſomething better ſtill, he has chipped away the rough marble, from the block on which theſe miniſters are at work, and which will, they know not how, be ſhaped into a beautiful ſtatue of Urania.

After deeds ſo worthy, I am a little vexed to ſee Voltaire keep Eaſter with ſuch folly, and afford the public ſuch a farce. Well; let him print his confeſſion of faith, to which no one gives credence! Let him ſully the maſculine robe of philoſophy, by theſe trappings of hypocriſy, in which he muffles himſelf!—He writes

no more to me. He will never pardon me, for having been the friend of Maupertuis; this is an irremiſſible crime. It is ſaid he has quarrelled with his biſhop; that the latter has complained to the court, and that the moſt chriſtian king has given ſentence againſt Voltaire; that fear has ſeized on the poor philoſopher, and that he has yielded to the mummeries of Eaſter and the altar, leſt the powers whoſe patience he has not a little abuſed ſhould no longer have forbearance.

That man would have had too many advantages, over his contemporaries, had it not been for the leaven of his foibles. His hatred reſembles that of the God of Abraham, of Iſaac, and of Jacob; and he would puniſh, even to the fourth generation, men like Desfontaines, Rouſſeau, Freron, Pompignan, &c. This is neither in the taſte of the academy nor of the portico; for you philoſophers,

> Calmly enthron'd on Newton's conquer'd orbs,
> Deaf to the clamours of the croaking foe,
> Him in his mire, with juſt diſdain, ye leave;
> And thus the futile ſlander turn to praiſe.

Such ought to be the practice of all thoſe who know how to deſpiſe ridiculous accuſations. For who will believe, on the word of a newſmonger of the Lower Rhine, that an academician of

eighty

eighty has been killed by contradiction, and irony. This is a kind of death hitherto unknown, and ſo ſhall remain. Artful detraction is dangerous; but ſuch nonſenſe as this certainly never can draw down any thing but contempt.

Our geometrician of Berlin is in excellent health, and rather lives in the planet Venus than on this terraqueous globe. The people, who have heard ſpeak of Venus and her paſſage over the ſun's diſk, have been two nights on the watch, to obſerve the phenomenon. You will laugh at the expence of my good countrymen; but this is all the wit they have.

You tell me of works which you have ſent, but which have not yet arrived. I know the *Synonymes François*, and have long had the work. It is a uſeful book, for it teaches us how to eſtimate exactly the terms of your language; and I ſuſpect it is a new edition of this work which is on the road for me.

I own I am ſufficiently diſguſted with the new works which at preſent appear in France; they are ſo ſuperabundant, ſo full of paradoxes, of looſe and inconſiſtent reaſonings, and, in addition to theſe defects, have ſo little genius that they might inſpire contempt for a love for letters, had not the preceding age furniſhed us with maſter-pieces of every kind. The happy fecundity of that age rewards us for the barrenneſs of the

the preſent. I was born at the end of that epocha, in which the human mind burſt out in all its ſplendor. The great men who were the glory of thoſe happy times are now no more; and France has no one on whom ſhe can at preſent rely, like ſtately and ſtrong columns to ſupport the falling edifice, except on you and Voltaire. I therefore hope we ſhall leave this world together, and travel in company toward that country of which no geographer has yet given us a map, no traveller a deſcription, nor any quarter-maſter has pointed out the road, but which we ſhall be obliged to find as well as we can. Till the moment of departure, however, may you enjoy perfect health, with all the happineſs our human condition will admit of, and preſerve your mind in unſhaken tranquillity! Such are the prayers of all philoſophers, for their dear Athenagoras.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER XLII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, Auguſt 7, 1769.

THANKS to your majeſty, I am perfectly tranquil, relative to the two only countries on

on earth for which I intereſt myſelf; that which has the happineſs to have you for a ſovereign, and that which I have the honour to inhabit. After ſuch an aſſurance, let Roman catholics, called Mahometans, and Schiſmatics, who pretend they are for toleration, murder each other at their pleaſure. I ſhall be ſatisfied with repeating the *de profundis*, for the repoſe of their ſouls, without diſturbing myſelf concerning the ſucceſs of their arms, or thoſe grand events which I believe never will be the reſult. Should the Alcoran be victorious, we have then only to believe in the animal Borak.

I know not whether the Corſicans, whom we have expedited into the other world, are more at their eaſe there than they were here; but it ſeems to me that Sertorius Paoli has brought the buſineſs to but a fooliſh kind of concluſion. He is accuſed of being *ſomewhat* of a poltroon, which has *ſomewhat* appeared in his conduct; and this, it muſt be owned, is a defect *ſomewhat* eſſential, in the chief of a nation that wiſhes to be free.

It is affirmed they are often obliged to pull the cordelier Pope by the ſleeve, to induce him to aboliſh the Jeſuits. Nor do I much wonder at this: to propoſe, to the Pope, the deſtruction of theſe brave warriors is equal to propoſing, to

your majeſty, to diſband your guards. Not but I imagine men are much ſurpriſed, in Spain, Portugal, and at Naples, to ſee the ſucceſſor of St. Peter and your majeſty contending, who ſhall protect the ſons of Ignatius. This ſeems a fact as aſtoniſhing, in theſe enlightened countries, as the adventure of the two miſſals, which were formerly thrown into the fire, to know which was the beſt, and which both were burnt, to the great diſappointment of the gaping ſpectators. It may, however, for a moment, divert your majeſty to be told that the general of the Jeſuits, in a petition preſented to the late Pope, did me the honour to cite me, as an authority which could not be ſuſpected, in favour of his order; becauſe I had ſomewhere ſaid that the Jeſuits are the Janiſſaries of the holy ſee, and like them neceſſary to the ſupport of the empire.

I know not on what terms Voltaire will be with God's new earthly vicegerent. It is ſaid he was ſeriouſly threatened with excommunication, by his predeceſſor. He informs me he has great fear of dying *a martyr*, which was the reaſon he *confeſſed*, and that, at the worſt, he might be but *a confeſſor*. He has lately written a ſmall pamphlet, intitled PERPETUAL PEACE, which is a violent declaration of war; or rather a continuation of war againſt thoſe whom you wot

wot of. He ſays that his biſhop of Annecy, who calls himſelf prince of Geneva, is a couſin-german of his ſtone-maſon; and that the mortar of the prelate is not adheſive.

It appears as impoſſible to me as to your majeſty to imagine that an old man of eighty ſhould die of vexation, or apoplexy, becauſe he had been called a dotard; but I will venture to aſſure your majeſty that the people of Berlin have been kind enough to believe this: nor indeed am I aſtoniſhed at it, after what your majeſty has told me, of their ſitting up two nights to ſee Venus paſs the ſun.

Fortunately, ſire, your academy of ſciences does not reſemble the remainder of the nation. Its memoirs form an excellent work, and prove it to be one of the moſt learned and ſelect ſocieties in Europe. I do not ſpeak of M. de la Grange alone, whoſe merit is ſo well known to your majeſty; but, among others, of Meſſieurs Lambert and Beguelin, who have both inſerted excellent papers in the collection, and who appear to me worthy of the favours with which your majeſty has ever honoured merit.

Your majeſty has appointed me a rendezvous in the valley of Jehoſaphat; and, according to all appearance, I ſhall be there firſt. I know not from whom the Holy Ghoſt proceeds, but

ſhould be very glad to know from whom proceed the two true deities of this world, Digeſtion and Sleep. I would travel in ſearch of them, be they where they would.

I intreat your majeſty to accept my moſt humble congratulations, on the marriage of the prince of Pruſſia. I flatter myſelf you are perfectly perſuaded of the lively intereſt I take, in whatever concerns your illuſtrious houſe, and auguſt perſon.

In theſe ſentiments, and with the moſt profound reſpect, I ſhall all my life remain, &c.

LETTER XLIII.

From the King.

September 14, 1769.

I PROFIT by the departure of the ſieur Grimm to ſend you this letter, and to inform you that hitherto neither fortune, chance, nor providence has determined which of the belligerent powers ſhall be victorious. Monſieur St. Nicholas, ſwimming upon his mill-ſtone, and whoſe underſtanding is held in good repute,

pute, has perſuaded prince Gallitzin to retreat to Kaminieck.

I am glad that you are ſatisfied with the memoirs of our academy. The three perſons of whom you ſpeak are, paſt diſpute, the three moſt worthy members of the body. Men of talents, of every claſs, are very uncommon. It is very difficult to find men equal to our wiſhes, in theſe times of ſterility. A more ſelect aſſembly would be difficult to procure.

If you will not give me the meeting at the valley of Jehoſaphat, determine to meet me here. There is no intermediate choice: and I, for my part, ſhould be much better pleaſed to ſee you clad in fleſh and blood than in I know not what diſguiſe, and in the guiſe of a ghoſt; for, without tongue and without voice, I cannot ſuſpect that our converſation would be exceedingly witty, or inſtructive. I have charged M. Grimm to inform you of the intereſt I take in your welfare; nor can you be unacquainted with the eſteem with which I am, &c.

LETTER XLIV.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, October 16, 1769.

M. GRIMM, who has only been returned a few days to France, has delivered the letter with which your majeſty has been pleaſed to honour me, and for which I intreat you to accept my humble thanks. He is returned, ſire, with a heart penetrated with that reſpect, admiration, and attachment, with which your majeſty inſpires all thoſe who have the honour to approach your perſon. But what moſt intereſts me, for, like Bartholomew, I proceed immediately to eſſentials *, M. Grimm has given me the moſt ſatisfactory information concerning your majeſty's health, and gaiety; for gaiety is one of the moſt convincing proofs of good health.

The three perſons whom your majeſty does me the honour to mention, Meſſieurs de la Grange, Beguelin, and Lambert, are in effect the beſt members of the academy; and moſt

* *Car je reſſemble à Bartholomée, qui allait droit au ſolide, &c.* I do not know, or cannot recollect, to what M. D'Alembert alludes; perhaps to ſome character in comedy, or farce, who *minded the main chance*. T.

worthy,

worthy, for this reaſon, of your majeſty's favours. I hope young M. Bernouilli will follow their example. I have lately received a diſſertation from M. Cochius, which obtained the prize on metaphyſics. It appears to be well written, and full of ſound philoſophy. If M. Cochius be not a member of the academy, it ſeems to me he is worthy of a place in the claſs of ſpeculative philoſophy, or in that of the belles lettres.

It has been aſſerted, ſire, nor have I any difficulty in believing the aſſertion, that the emperor is returned to Vienna, delighted by your majeſty. In all his travels, he has certainly ſeen nothing of equal worth. Since this monarch has formed an acquaintance with your majeſty, I am convinced he will never make war on you; and this is the ſubject which occupies me moſt; for the tranquillity and ſafety of your majeſty are ſtill more dear to me than your fame, which has itſelf loſt nothing, by your admirable conduct, during ſix years peace. On theſe conditions, I leave the Turks and the Ruſſians to maſſacre each other, when and how they pleaſe.

My health is continually fluctuating; I wiſh at leaſt it would permit me to acquire ſufficient ſtrength once more to throw myſelf at your majeſty's feet; for this ſame valley of Jehoſaphat is but a gloomy kind of rendezvous: but let

me meet your majeſty in what valley I may, you will ever find my heart full of that gratitude, profound reſpect, and admiration with which I am, &c.

LETTER XLV.

From the King.

November 15, 1769.

I AM glad I became acquainted with the ſieur Grimm; he is a man of wit, has a philoſophic head, and his memory is well ſtored and embelliſhed. He never can enough repeat how much I eſteem you, and how highly I intereſt myſelf in all that relates to you. He found me in tolerable good health, becauſe the period of convaleſcence, after a fit of the gout, is exactly that in which the health is moſt vigorous. Beſide that the beſt remedy, for youth and age, is indiſputably peace of mind; which, inſpiring mild cheerfulneſs, infuſes new balm into the blood, and appeaſes thoſe violent agitations which are deſtructive of our weak fibres.

I imagine the good cordelier Pope will have need to recur to this remedy; at leaſt his pretty children

children are cutting him out plenty of work. I would rather be a Cobler than a Pope in the preſent age. The charm is broken, and the wretched quack continues to vaunt his drugs, which no one comes to buy; while his daring auditors are attempting to overturn his ſtage. I know not what Engliſhman it was who, after having drawn the horoſcope of hierarchy, and calculated its duration, fixed its death at the end of the preſent century. I ſhould not be ſorry to be a ſpectator of this event, though it does not ſeem to me quite ſo near: I rather think its preſent abſurdities will endure two ages longer; being, as they are, ſupported by popular fanaticiſm.

From what I have ſaid, the queſtion may be ſtarted whether the religion of the vulgar muſt not be intermingled with fable. I think it muſt; becauſe thoſe animals which the ſchool has deigned to name rational have, in effect, very little rationality. What are a few enlightened profeſſors, or ſage academicians, compared to the immenſe multitude of which a great monarchy is compoſed? The voice of theſe preceptors of the human race is feeble, and cannot be heard beyond a certain ſmall extent. How may all the prejudices that are imbibed with our mother's milk be eradicated? Who ſhall

wreſtle

wreſtle with cuſtom, which is the reaſon of fools; or ſtifle in the heart of man thoſe ſeeds of ſuperſtition which nature has ſown there, and which are nurtured by the perception of their own weakneſs? All this induces me to believe there is no improvement to be made, in this fine ſpecies of unfeathered bipeds. The herd of mankind will probably ever remain the ſport of thoſe knaves whoſe endeavours are to deceive.

Our academy, though not ſplendid, makes a ſilent progreſs. The approbation you beſtow on ſome of its members renders them more dear to me, and the hope you give me of making a tour into theſe countries inſpires greater pleaſure than the Jews will receive, at the ſecond apparition of Elias. On this anchor at preſent I reſt; for I neither know any map in which to find the valley of Jehoſaphat, the road that leads thither, nor the language of the country. There will be much more certainty in an earthly interview, at which I can with my combined ſenſes aſſure you, face to face, of the eſteem, &c.

LET-

LETTER XLVI.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, December 1ſt, 1769.

I IMAGINE your majeſty is much occupied, at the preſent moment, by that violent fermentation with which the north of Europe is agitated. I continually fear to importune you, by uſeleſs letters; but I cannot deny myſelf the ſatisfaction of teſtifying the pleaſure I feel, at the birth of a new prince to your auguſt and illuſtrious houſe. I hope that her royal highneſs, the princeſs of Pruſſia, will again give occaſion to ſimilar rejoicings.

Some time ago, I had the honour to thank your majeſty, by a letter at leaſt long enough, for the information you had pleaſed to afford me. If I might venture to take the liberty, I ſhould aſk what the preſent war portends; and what will be the fate of Poland, the ſovereign of which appears to me to be the Holy Ghoſt of kings. Voltaire does not ſeem vexed at the ill ſucceſs of the Turks, who he affirms neither convert nor perſecute, but brutalize. For my own part, when, as it often happens, I find my head but ill upon my ſhoulders, I think on the poor

Grand

Grand Vizir, who has lately been decapitated, and own mine is a more favourable deſtiny, bad as it is; eſpecially when I compare it, ſire, to the fate of yours, which ſingly is burthened with ſo many affairs, and which yet finds time to cultivate philoſophy and poetry, with the greateſt ſucceſs. Theſe you have reconciled; may you, in like manner, reconcile St. Nicholas and the aſs Borak; which I cannot but think, eſpecially in the laſt affair, little better than a beaſt *. I am, &c.

LETTER XLVII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, December 18, 1769.

IT is not long ſince I had the honour to write to your majeſty, and I continually make a ſcruple of obtruding too often with my letters; perſuaded, as I well may be, that your time may be better employed than in their peruſal. I cannot however avoid returning my moſt

* *Une bête*——Blockhead, fool, ideot, aſs, &c.——This is one of the moſt teaſing, becauſe one of the moſt common, puns in the French language, to a tranſlator. T.

humble

humble thanks, for the prologue which you have had the goodneſs to ſend me. The princeſs, who is the ſubject of this poem, appears to me to be praiſed with equal gallantry and art. I know that ſhe merits theſe praiſes, becauſe your majeſty has done me the honour ſeveral times to inform me of her great muſical talents. I know too, ſire, were the word princeſs changed to that of king, to whom theſe eulogiums might be ſtill better applied; not omitting to add others, if poſſible more meritorious, becauſe relative to objects greater, and more eſſential to the happineſs of mankind. The concluſion of the prologue, ſire, is a new pleaſantry, and in an excellent taſte. *Avancez mes bâtards** made me laugh heartily. Alas! Melpomene and Thalia have little elſe than baſtards; for even our comedians of Paris are not too legitimate.

I humbly thank your majeſty for the news you ſend me of your health. I receive particular pleaſure, from that tranquillity of mind you ſeem at preſent to enjoy; for this, ſire, aſſures me of the happineſs of your majeſty, in which I intereſt myſelf firſt, and moſt. It next informs me of the happineſs of your ſubjects, and perhaps of the pacific diſpoſition of the other

* Advance my baſtards.

powers of Europe. I know not whether the old ſalve-ſeller, formerly a cordelier, be equally tranquil, relative to the fate of his crazy bark: I think however it will continue on float longer than while he lives. I own his drugs do not ſell as they did formerly, but they are moſt reſpectfully ſwallowed ſtill; I will not ſay merely by the vulgar, but by people of more elevated rank; and purchaſed by others, who indeed do not ſwallow them, but who dare not throw them in the fire.

The queſtion whether the religion of the vulgar muſt not be intermingled with fable merits, ſire, to be propoſed by an academy like that of Berlin. For my own part, I think truth ſhould always be taught mankind, and that there can be no real advantage in deceit. The academy of Berlin, by propoſing ſuch a queſtion, as a prize queſtion in metaphyſics, would, if I do not miſtake, do itſelf much honour, and diſtinguiſh itſelf from other literary ſocieties, in which too many prejudices are ſtill found.

Permit me, on this occaſion, to aſſure your majeſty of the intire gratitude of Meſſieurs de la Grange, Lambert, and Beguelin; who ſeem to be deeply affected by your majeſty's bounties, and very ardent to merit them, more and more effectually.

I con-

I conclude by intreating your majeſty to receive, with your uſual goodneſs, my hearty wiſhes for your welfare, at the beginning of the coming year, which is the thirtieth of your glorious reign. May thirty more ſucceed, and may fate add to your illuſtrious life thoſe days which ſhe ſeems determined to retrench from mine!

I am, with the moſt profound reſpect, moſt tender gratitude, and moſt lively admiration, &c.

LETTER XLVIII.

From the King.

January 4, 1770.

THE north, Protagoras, is more peaceable than you ſuppoſe. While diſquietude and confuſion reign in the eaſt, we who are called the Elders of Europe want alacrity to cabal, like a certain people of the ſouth, who are ſometimes known by the name of Gauls. Theſe inſinuating good folks ſhow their noſes every where, often where they have no buſineſs, and bear that reſtleſſneſs with which they are themſelves tormented over all quarters of the globe. They imagine that, by communicating it, they will

diminiſh the portion which has fallen to their ſhare, and that they will themſelves become more ſerene. But this it is affirmed is loſt labour, and to become more tranquil themſelves (I dare not venture to ſay more ſage) they muſt exorciſe the demon by which they are poſſeſſed; for ſo I have lately been aſſured they are, by a very grave divine, with whom I converſe on my own ſalvation. I leave the Holy Ghoſt as you have coupled him, with the king of the Sarmatians, and who never were ſo coupled before by any council: notwithſtanding the ill credit in which they at preſent are, their turn may come; and, if fate ſhall pleaſe, they may recover favour and make their fortune. This comrade of the king is ſtill young; he is like the duke de Laurangais, by the commiſſion of folly he may become wiſe. His birth has not been proved above fifteen hundred years; ſo that you perceive he is ſtill in his infancy. God knows how many millions of years have paſſed away before his old papa brought himſelf into credit, and enjoyed that reſpect in which he is at preſent held. Time is omnipotent; he produces, deſtroys, abaſes, and elevates gods and men. Let us confide in him, my dear D'Alembert, and our knight-errant will in turn find an opportunity, to diſplay his abilities.

In

In the interim, my family amuſe themſelves with manufacturing children. This is a good remedy againſt indolence, and which ought to be applied, after a ſeven years war. I thank you for the part you take in theſe matters; and, were this the age of Catherine de Medicis, I would entreat you to draw the horoſcope of an embryo which may happen to come into the world ſix months hence; but, as it is not, I excuſe you.

For my part, inſtead of children, I make bad memoirs, for the academy; a ſpecimen of which you here ſee. I imagine you will be partly of my opinion, reſpecting the principle I have purſued. My ideas, I believe, are calculated to promote the good of humanity; but I have been obliged to ſpare, in order that they may be adopted by, the clergy. If good be but promoted, it matters little by what means. I am a great partiſan for morality, becauſe I know men, and perceive the good of which it may be productive. An algebraiſt, who lives locked up in his cabinet, ſees nothing but numbers, and proportions, which produce no effect in the moral world. The progreſs of manners is of more worth to ſociety than all the calculations of Newton.

I hope you will freely tell me your opinion,

reſpecting my memoir; and that you remain perfectly convinced of my eſteem.

On which I pray God to take you into his holy keeping.

LETTER XLIX.

From the King.

January 8, 1770.

YOU know that we poets are accuſed of indulging a little too much in flattery, and hyperbole: of theſe however the prologue, written for the electreſs of Saxony, is not ſuſceptible; becauſe this princeſs is endowed with uncommon qualities, and poſſeſſed of talents ſufficient for the fame of an individual. As the public however is rather prone to malice than admiration, it was neceſſary to give this malice food, by a little gentle diſcipline beſtowed upon the players, who certainly merit caſtigation. I imagine you find it difficult to obtain good actors, at Paris; but, had you ſeen thoſe who repreſented this piece, your company in compariſon would have appeared divine.

If, as philoſophers ſay, all the occupations of men are but the ſports of boys, it is better to write

write a bad prologue than to diſturb the peace of Europe. I have no quarrel, either with Mahomet or the Sarmatians, who are worrying each other. I live in peace and good intelligence with all my neighbours, and write ballads for my own amuſement.

I know not what THE INFALLIBLE ſeated on the ſeven hills may think, but I know that he intereſts himſelf in finiſhing and improving our catholic church of Berlin; and that he does not hate me, regarding me as one of the props of his pretorian band, which others would oblige him to diſmiſs. He ſatisfies himſelf with diſputing, inch by inch, the remainder of an ideal credit, which makes him apprehenſive of approaching bankruptcy. He finds himſelf in the ſame ſituation as your comptroller of the finances; but I will wager that France, the moſt ancient kingdom on earth, will plead her right of precedency to become bankrupt; and that your purſes will be emptied before the reign of ſuperſtition ſhall be aboliſhed.

The queſtion you propoſe to our academy appertains to profound philoſophy. You wiſh us to ſcrutiniſe the nature and conſtitution of the human mind; and to decide whether man be ſuſceptible of rather confiding in his reaſon than in his imagination. From the little knowledge I

poſſeſs, I ſhould incline toward imagination; for the marvellous always ſeduces, and man is rather a reaſoner than reaſonable. I rely on the experience of all ages. You can find no people whoſe religion had not a mixture of abſurd fable and morality, neceſſary for the ſupport of ſociety. Egyptians, Jews, Perſians, Greeks, and Romans, each made fable the baſis of their religion. You find the ſame marvellous ſyſtem eſtabliſhed among the African nations; and if you do not meet with the like phrenzy in the Ladrone iſlands, it is becauſe the inhabitants had no religion whatever. The Chineſe, paſt diſpute, are the people who ſeem leaſt addicted to ſuperſtition; but, though the great follow the doctrines of Confucius, the people do not ſeem to imitate them; they receive their bonzes with open arms, who feed them with impoſture; a food proper for the multitude, and adapted to its groſs appetite.

The proofs I have alleged are taken from ſuch examples as hiſtory affords; and there are others, which I think more cogent, that ariſe from the condition of man, and that impediment which daily and neceſſary labour is to the progreſs of ſuch knowledge as ſhould render the bulk of mankind ſuperior to the prejudices of education. Let us ſuppoſe a monarchy which contains

contains ten millions of people; from theſe ten millions let us firſt deduct huſbandmen, manufacturers, artiſts, and ſoldiers; and the remainder will be about fifty thouſand perſons, of the two ſexes. From this fifty thouſand let us ſubſtract twenty-five thouſand females; and the reſidue will be compoſed of the nobility, and higher order of citizens. Among theſe let us examine how many there are who are indolent, incapable, puſillanimous, and debauched; and the reſult of the calculation will nearly be that, among what is called a civiliſed nation, conſiſting of about ten millions of inhabitants, you will ſcarcely find a thouſand literati. And how great will be the difference of genius among this thouſand! But, be it ſuppoſed poſſible that a thouſand philoſophers ſhould be of one opinion, and not themſelves ſubject to any prejudices: what effects would their leſſons produce on the public? If eight tenths of the nation are employed in obtaining food, and do not read; if another tenth be triflingly indolent, debauched, or incapable; the reſult is, that the little good ſenſe our ſpecies can poſſeſs muſt be engroſſed by a ſmall part of the nation; that the remainder are not ſuſceptible of this good ſenſe; and that, conſequently, the marvellous will always prevail with the multitude.

Theſe conſiderations led me to believe that credulity, ſuperſtition, and the ſcrupulous fears of timid minds will ever preponderate, in the public ſcale; that the number of philoſophers will be ſmall, in all ages, and that bigotry, of ſome kind, will continually lord it over the earth. The chriſtian religion was a ſpecies of theiſm, at its commencement. It ſoon granted an act of naturalization to pagan idols, and ceremonies; and, by new embroidery, ſo entirely covered the ſimple robe it received at its firſt inſtitution, that it could no longer be known for the ſame. Imperfection, moral and phyſical, is the characteriſtic of the globe we inhabit. All attempts to enlighten it end but in loſs of time, and are often dangerous to thoſe who are thus active. We muſt be ſatisfied with being individually wiſe, if ſo we can be, and abandon the vulgar to error, endeavouring only to prevent thoſe crimes which are deſtructive of the order of ſociety. It was well ſaid, by Fontenelle, that, if he had his hand full of truths, he would not open it, to ſcatter them among the public; for the public was not worth the trouble. I think nearly the ſame; ſtill wiſhing well to the philoſopher Diagoras, and praying God to take him into his holy keeping.

LET-

LETTER L.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, January 29, 1770.

THE letter your majeſty did me the honour to write, dated the 4th inſtant, and the memoir that came with it, did not arrive till the 27th of the preſent month. I know not how this packet happened to be ſo long on the road, and I only take the liberty to explain myſelf thus, that your majeſty may not ſuſpect me of negligence. I have not loſt a moment, but immediately read your excellent memoir. I can with truth aſſure your majeſty that I am entirely of your opinion, with reſpect to the principles which ſhould ſerve as the baſis of morality. If your majeſty will be pleaſed to caſt your eye over my elements of philoſophy, in the 4th volume of my miſcellanies, pages 72 and 92, you will there perceive that I indicate *the intimate connection between our true intereſt and the fulfilling of our duty*, as the ſource of morality and happineſs: and that I regard *enlightened ſelf-love as the principle of all moral ſacrifice* (or *abſtinence*). I own, ſire, that I did little more than point out theſe truths, which your majeſty has ſo well explained in your work, with philoſophy the moſt eloquent, and the moſt wholſome.

One ſole point has continually embarraſſed me, in my efforts to render this moral principle abſolutely, and without reſtriction, univerſal. This is to know whether thoſe who reſerve nothing, who give all to ſociety and to whom ſociety refuſes all, who ſcarcely can by their labour feed a numerous family, or who even are unable to procure food, if ſuch men I ſay can have any other principle of morality than law; and how it would be poſſible to perſuade them that it is their true intereſt to be virtuous, when it ſhall happen that they may be the contrary with impunity. Could I but have found a ſatisfactory ſolution of this problem, I ſhould long ſince have publiſhed my moral catechiſm.

I wiſh I were able to anſwer your majeſty more at length; but, for theſe three weeks, I have frequently been troubled by a vertigo, which occaſions ſuch a debility of mind as to interdict all application, and ſcarcely to permit me to hold a pen. Your majeſty makes excellent memoirs, and your auguſt family charming children. For my part I can neither make the one nor the other, thanks to the ruinous ſtate of my poor machine. But there is one of my faculties, ſire, which will never grow more feeble; and this is the lively gratitude, &c.

LET-

LETTER LI.

From the King.

February 17, 1770.

THE approbation you beſtow on my memoir incites the greater pleaſure in me, becauſe your ſuffrage is of more weight than the applauſe of ten thouſand of the ignorant. To anſwer the objection you have ſtarted, relative to thoſe who bend under the extreme of wretchedneſs, it muſt firſt be allowed that the laws, and the charity of the well-diſpoſed, come to the ſuccour of the unfortunate; and that, public calamities excepted, there is no example of any family, not even of a ſingle man, who has abſolutely died of hunger. Thoſe men who have been moſt ill-treated, by fortune, are ſuch as depend entirely on their labour. When ſickneſs comes, they are reduced to want, becauſe their revenue ceaſes with their work. After recovering, they find themſelves in debt, and too weak to apply themſelves to their daily occupations. This is no doubt a ſevere trial, eſpecially when burthened by a family; but, inſtead of robbing or murdering on the high road, which actions lead to the gallows or the rack, would they not do better to have recourſe to the

compaſſion

compaſſion of the virtuous, that they might with propriety find relief, inſtead of plunging themſelves into wretchedneſs a hundred times more dreadful? The principles I propoſe, by which vice ſhould be ſuppreſſed, are ſelf-preſervation, which ſhould lead men to avoid actions by which the loſs of life may be incurred; an attention to reputation, which ſhould prevent them from blindly yielding to any diſgraceful paſſion; and the love of honourable fame, that powerful motive, which induces all thoſe who are thus actuated to abhor whatever may injure their renown, and impels them to the practice of the ſublimeſt virtue. If we do but properly apply this panacea to the various diſeaſes of the mind, we certainly ſhall perform aſtoniſhing cures.

You will perceive, in all this reaſoning, I take it for granted that I addreſs myſelf to a nation under the dominion of the laws; for it is very certain, without the repreſſive principle of puniſhment, the force of reaſoning would be inſufficient, ſingly to impede the ferocious ſallies of diſorderly ſelf-love.

I ſhall add nothing more at preſent, as well to ſpare your health as for want of matter, praying God, &c.

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LETTER LII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, March 9, 1770.

I AM gratefully penetrated by the goodneſs with which your majeſty deigns to interrupt your important affairs, a moment to employ yourſelf with the metaphyſical reveries of a poor valetudinarian. The anſwer you have been pleaſed to give, to the moral impediment which I took the liberty to ſtate, when ſpeaking of your excellent memoir, has certainly all the ſolidity of which the ſubject is capable. I allow that the fear of the laws and death, on the one part, and on the other the hope of relief from the virtuous, may be a curb capable of retaining thoſe who live in indigence. But I ſuppoſe, which is poſſible, that the indigent perſon ſhould firſt be deprived of all hope of ſuccour; and again that he ſhould be well aſſured of his power to conceal the theft he may commit, on the ſuperfluities of the rich, to provide for his own ſubſiſtence; and I aſk what he ought to do in this caſe; and whether he would be able, or whether he ought, to ſuffer himſelf and his family to periſh with hunger? The ſame difficulty does not occur with one who has poſ-

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ſeſſions of any kind: he ought not to ſteal, even ſecretly, becauſe it is his intereſt that his property ſhould not be ſtolen.

I entreat your majeſty's permiſſion to make a few reflections on another queſtion, which I have before had the honour to mention, and which procured me ſo excellent and ſo philoſophic a letter: that is to ſay—*Whether, on religious ſubjects or on any other, it be proper to deceive the people?*

I agree with your majeſty that ſuperſtition is the food of the multitude; but I think the multitude would not ſwallow this food, except when it can procure no better. Superſtition, inculcated and taking root during youth, will no doubt cede to reaſon, when reaſon preſents itſelf. Reaſon may come too late, when the place is taken: ſtill, let the ignorant multitude, even for the firſt time, contemplate reaſon and good ſenſe on one ſide, and abſurdity on the other, does your majeſty imagine reaſon would not have the preference? Nay, I will ſay more: reaſon, even though it come too late, need but perſevere to triumph. I do not think, like Fontenelle, we ſhould keep the hand cloſed, when we are certain it contains truth: we ought only to open it with precaution, one finger after the other; and, when the hand ſhall be wholly open, truth will

will be wholly known. The philoſophers who open it too ſuddenly are madmen, and their only recompenſe is the loſs of their hand; but thoſe who keep it abſolutely ſhut do not perform their duty, toward mankind.

Your majeſty's occupations will not longer permit you to liſten to my declamation; and the feebleneſs of my own head, vacant and ſtupefied as it continues to be, would prevent me, were I bold enough, further to purſue ſuch reflections. May the fates long preſerve that underſtanding which your majeſty received from nature, and which is much more eſſential than mine to the good of mankind, and of philoſophy!

I am, with the moſt profound reſpect, &c.

LETTER LIII.

From the King.

April 3d, 1770.

I WISH your health were better and more vigorous, that you might lengthen your letters; for while we diſpute we obtain knowledge, and you might afford me information. Might ridicule be indulged, I ſhould ſoon overthrow the difficulty which you have ſtarted, by anſwering that it

ought not to have been ſtarted by a Frenchman, who, in his own nation beholds the great thieves honoured, and the ſmall hanged. You ſee all France overrun by farmers-general, receivers, treaſurers, &c; whoſe trade it is individually to rob your king, and his kingdom. But I abandon ſuch a defence, which is unworthy the gravity and importance of the ſubject; and, aſſuming the ſerious tone and phyſiognomy of a pedagogue, I ſhall anſwer my dear D'Alembert that the thing you ſuppoſe ſcarcely can happen, becauſe all hearts are not equally hard; and there are compaſſionate people in all ſocieties, who liſten to the cries of wretchedneſs. Should there miraculouſly chance to be a family deſtitute of all aid, and in the miſerable ſtate you have deſcribed, I ſhould not heſitate to declare that theft, in ſuch a caſe, would be right. 1. Becauſe this family has been refuſed all ſuccour, inſtead of receiving any. 2. Becauſe for a man to ſuffer himſelf, his wife, and his children, to periſh is a greater crime than to rob another, of what he does not want. 3. Becauſe the intention of the theft is virtuous, and the act originates in indiſpenſable neceſſity. I am even well perſuaded that there is no court of juſtice which would not acquit ſuch a theft; the veracity of the fact being firſt well proved. The bonds of ſociety

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are formed by reciprocal ſervice; but, if any ſociety be compoſed of perſons deſtitute of pity, the bonds then are broken, and the members recur to the ſtate of pure nature, in which every thing is decided by ſuperiority of ſtrength.

This is the anſwer which a child in philoſophy ſends to the great Anaxagoras, who amuſes himſelf with ſuch prattle.

You next propoſe, in a few words, a queſtion to which I cannot reply, except according to the noble Teutonic cuſtom, by a volume in folio. Do you not perceive, my dear Anaxagoras, the diſcuſſion into which I cannot but enter, if I would perfectly explain ſuch a ſubject? But, in order to ſatisfy you, I will be as conciſe as poſſible.

Were this the firſt day of the world, and were you to aſk—*Is it proper to deceive the people?* I ſhould anſwer no; becauſe, error and ſuperſtition being unknown, ſhould not be propagated; they ſhould rather be ſtifled. From hiſtorical retroſpect, I diſcover two ſpecies of impoſtors; the one to whom ſuperſtition has been made the ladder of fortune; and the other ſuch as have, by the aid of ſome prejudices, moulded the minds of the people to their own advantage. Among the firſt ſpecies of impoſtors are the Bonzes, Zoroaſter, Numa, Mahomet, &c; and

theſe I totally abandon to your mercy. The latter are politicians, who for the better government of mankind have had recourſe to the marvellous, in order to lead and render men docile. Among theſe I enumerate the Augurs, whoſe aid was ſo often uſeful at Rome, to prevent or calm popular ſeditions, which the enterpriſing Tribunes endeavoured to excite. I know not how to condemn Scipio Africanus for his intercourſe with the nymph, by which he acquired the confidence of his troops, and was able to execute acts ſo great. I do not blame Marius for his old woman; nor Sertorius for being followed by a hind. All thoſe who have to manage a multitude of men, who are to correſpond to one end, will ſometimes be obliged to have recourſe to deluſion; nor do I think them to be condemned, if they impoſe on the public for reaſons ſuch as I have alleged.

It is different with groſs ſuperſtition, which is one of the drugs that nature has diſperſed over the univerſe, and which even partakes of the character of man. I am perſuaded that, were a colony of incredulous perſons eſtabliſhed, after a certain number of years ſuperſtitions would ſpring up. The marvellous ſeems made for the mob. One ridiculous religion is aboliſhed, and another more ridiculous introduced. There

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are revolutions in the opinions of men, but ſtill bigotry ſucceeds to bigotry. I think it very good and uſeful to enlighten mankind. To combat fanaticiſm is to diſarm the moſt cruel, the moſt ſanguinary of monſters. To exclaim againſt monkiſh abuſes, and againſt vows, which contradict the intentions of nature and prevent population, is certainly to ſerve mankind: but I think it would be impolitic, and even dangerous, to ſuppreſs thoſe aliments of ſuperſtition which are publicly diſtributed to children, and whom it is the will of their fathers thus to have fed.

The reformation, as you know, effected great changes. But how many wars, how much blind carnage and devaſtation have been the conſequence of daring to reject ſome articles of faith! What would be the fury of mankind, were all theſe articles to be ſuppreſſed? A nation without error, prejudice, ſuperſtition, and fanaticiſm, would no doubt be a very fine ſight; but it is ſaid, in the centuries of Noſtradamus, that no ſuch ſhall be found, till one be firſt diſcovered without vice, paſſion, and crime.

You philoſophers, who are the lights of this dark world, let ſome flaſhes of reaſon eſcape. And what is the conſequence? A few men of letters own reaſon is on your ſide; but the

Bonzes and Lamas exclaim, and an infinite number of fools hermetically close the crevices of their caves, to prevent your light from dazzling them and the inhabitants of their dens, and the world remains blind.

Philosophy, encouraged in the present age, is announced with more fortitude than ever. Yet what progress has it made? You will answer, the Jesuits are expelled. Granted: but, if you please, I will prove that vanity, secret revenge, cabal, and interest have accomplished the deed. In return, I will remind you of the legal murder of Calas; the persecution of Sirven; the cruel transaction at Amiens; the canonization of * * *; the witches that are publicly burnt at Rome; the ridiculous quarrels of the Swiss, on the subject of eternal torments; the theological fury of the priests of Holland, against those professors who taught that virtue was sufficient for mankind; and the species of religious war which at present rages in Poland. Ah! my dear Anaxagoras, man is an incorrigible animal, and rather sensitive than rational. However, I have drawn up a catechism for him, which I send you.

My feet are as ill as your stomach. I have the gout, or I should have answered you with more order; for my head is affected; and you know

know perhaps that we had a phyſician here, who when the head was diſeaſed preſcribed bleeding in the great toe. I therefore find it difficult to ſay whether my diſeaſe exiſts in the head or the feet: but, be it where it will, it will not prevent me from reſpecting and eſteeming you.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER LIV.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, April 21, 1770.

OF all the letters which your majeſty has done me the honour to write to me, I never was more ſtrongly and tenderly affected, than by that which I have juſt received, dated the 3d of the preſent month. Its arrival was neceſſary, to calm the violent inquietude I had for ſome days felt, concerning your majeſty's health, and the afflicting rumours which were current. My fears are now removed; and, though your majeſty is not freed from the gout, I perceive at leaſt you are not in danger.

A treatiſe has lately appeared on the gout, by

a phyſician of Angers, named Paulmier, which is ſaid to be excellent. The remedy he propoſes is the application of leeches. I know ſeveral perſons at Paris who, ſince the book has appeared, have uſed this remedy, and who at leaſt have found great eaſe. M. Mettra will immediately ſend it to your majeſty.

I am, at this moment, too much occupied by the health of your majeſty, to ſpeak of my own. My head continues in the ſame ſtate: the very firſt moment it will permit me ſo to do, I will anſwer your majeſty circumſtantially, relative to the different articles of the excellent and philoſophic letter I have juſt received, and alſo to your moral catechiſm. I entreat your majeſty's permiſſion to forget every thing, at the preſent, except your perſonal ſafety, ſo precious not only to your people, and to philoſophy, but to Europe, and mankind.

I am, with the moſt profound, and permit me to add, the moſt tender reſpect, &c.

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LETTER LV.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, April 30, 1770.

I PROFIT, not by a lucid interval, for it is long ſince I have had any, but by a moment in which the clouds are ſomewhat diſperſed from my brain, to do myſelf the honour of circumſtantially anſwering the philoſophic letter which your majeſty was kind enough to write, in reply to the queries I took the liberty to propoſe.

I think like your majeſty, on the firſt ſubject; and congratulate myſelf that I am of your opinion: not from any principle of adulation, of which I am incapable, but becauſe the reaſons alleged by your majeſty, in ſupport of your anſwer, appear to me valid, and had previouſly occurred to my mind. I am of your majeſty's opinion that theft is allowable and even juſt in a caſe of ſuch abſolute neceſſity as has been ſuppoſed. We will not enquire whether this abſolute neceſſity be merely a phantom, as your majeſty ſeems to imagine. I will not ſay, though I ſuſpect, it is not; for I have often ſeen people ſo unfortunate, ſo deſtitute of ſuccour, after having vainly knocked at a thouſand doors, that I

know not which they ought to have done, to have knocked at the next, or to have procured ſubſiſtence at the expence of the wealthy, if ſo they could have done with ſafety to themſelves.

True it is, ſire, that ſuch doctrine, no matter how rational, would not be proper to inſert in a treatiſe, or moral catechiſm, becauſe of the abuſe that might be made of it, by indolence or cupidity. Such an inconvenience impedes the writing of a complete courſe of morals, for the uſe of all orders of ſociety. I know not even whether, at leaſt in France, the laws would not condemn, no doubt with much regret, any unfortunate perſon under the circumſtances ſuppoſed. They would be obliged to commit injuſtice, leſt other men, not equally wretched, ſhould abuſe the precedent. If I do not miſtake, the diſtribution of wealth in ſociety is unequal, to monſtrous exceſs. It is as atrocious as abſurd to ſee ſome wallowing in ſuperfluity, and others in want of food. But, in great monarchies eſpecially, the evil cannot be remedied; and victims are ſometimes neceſſarily ſacrificed, though innocent, to prevent the poor members of ſociety arming againſt the rich, as they might be tempted, and perhaps would have a right to do.

With reſpect to the ſecond queſtion—*Is it proper to deceive the people?* I do not heſitate to think

think like your majeſty that, when error and ſuperſtition have no exiſtence in a nation, their birth ſhould be oppoſed by all poſſible means: and I farther believe with you that, if they have obtained power, they muſt not be violently attacked; becauſe impetuous zeal can only tend to load philoſophy with ineffectual guilt. I imagine that, inſtead of force, we ought to employ art, and patience; ought to make indirect attacks on error, without appearing to think on the ſubject; and to eſtabliſh the oppoſite truths, on ſolid foundations; careful not to make an application of them, to perſons or things. We muſt not point the cannon againſt the houſe, becauſe the inhabitants who defend it ſkirmiſh from the windows with their ſmall arms; but rather build another houſe, by its ſide, more habitable and commodious. People will inſenſibly come and live in the latter, and the houſe that ſerved as a den to wild beaſts will be deſerted.

The moral catechiſm, which your majeſty has done me the honour to ſend me, appears to me very proper for the young nobility, for whoſe uſe it is deſtined. The moral motives which are propoſed, to render them virtuous, are in fact the true, and the moſt proper to make an impreſſion principally upon that claſs

which, enjoying the chief advantages of ſociety, is more than any other intereſted in obſerving the laws, both written and traditional.

I am with the moſt profound reſpect, &c.

LETTER LVI.

From the King.

May 17, 1770.

I AM greatly obliged to you, for the concern you take in my health. The neceſſary chain of cauſes would have it that the acrid humours, collected in the veſſels, ſhould be productive of the gout, under which my ſufferings have been great. But I yield to the irrevocable decrees of nature. I had recourſe to regimen, and patience, and am recovered.

During my convaleſcence, the firſt book which fell into my hands was "An Eſſay on Prejudices." It drew me from that inert ſtate to which I had been reduced, by my loſt powers; and as, on many ſubjects, my thoughts are in the inverſe ratio of the ſelf-appointed philoſopher, who is the author of the book, I employed all the energy I poſſeſſed to diſcover his errors. I felt repulſive emotions to the ſentiments of the author,

author, who pretends that truth, being made for man, ſhould at all times be ſpoken. Whenever the author has fallen foul upon kings, generals, and poets, his ideas have not accorded with mine; becauſe I have the honour to be a tolerably bad poet (or public poiſoner) becauſe I have had the honour occaſionally to fight, in quality of a general (or mercenary executioner) and becauſe I have the honour to be a kind of king (or barbarous tyrant).

Theſe conſiderations, aſſimilated to my manner of thinking and according to the idea I have formed of things, have determined me to defend my comrades, and to prevent ſuch abuſe, often repeated by ſuch authors, from obtaining, by habit, and this frequent repetition in the public ear, the ſanction of received and indubitable opinions. My author tells me that my kingly comrades are a kind of fools, who can neither read nor write. I have read like a Benedictine, and have ſcribbled as much paper as the moſt hungry daily news-writers; it is therefore for me to plead their cauſe. I ſend my brief to Anaxagoras, who ſhall be our judge; and even, ſhould he think proper, he may preſent the work to the court, aſſured by this means of obtaining th firſt place in the academy of ſciences.

Pleaſantry

Pleaſantry apart, the work is very licentious, and very indecent. It may be ſaid that the author, like a mad dog, attacks every body, and ruſhes upon paſſengers, perfectly ſatisfied if he can but bite. He certainly merits ſimilar treatment. If truth be made for man, which I do not grant, truth muſt be ſpoken to him, on all occaſions. I conform to his own precepts, and have told him very ſincerely what I think of his work. He will find in me an obedient diſciple, who, when enlightened by his truth, makes it a duty to follow his example: and, ſince truth is always uſeful to man, I flatter myſelf he will approve the freedom with which I have ſpoken this truth.

But what is the end which this ſaid philoſopher propoſes by his work? Is it to change the religion of Europe? I have demonſtrated the thing to be impoſſible. Is it to reform government? Ill language does not carry conviction; it rather tends to irritate. Is it to inflame the imagination of the hot-headed, who by declaiming againſt government gain impriſonment in the Baſtile? This would be the purpoſe of a malevolent, a perverſe, a vicious being; and ſuch ought not to be the character of the author. Does he wiſh to become the martyr of natural religion? Such would be the attempt of a mad-

man; for he who has no hopes beyond the grave ought to render his preſent exiſtence as happy as poſſible, that being the only one he can enjoy. The author's want of art is peculiarly apparent, in his calumnies againſt the Chriſtian religion. To impute crimes to it is the act of a novice. The goſpel tells us, we ſhould do unto others as we would they ſhould do unto us; and this precept is the eſſence of all morality. It is therefore ridiculous, and outrageous exaggeration, to affirm that this religion is only productive of raſcals. We ought not to confound the law and the abuſe of the law. The law may be good, the abuſe pernicious; and an author who diſcovers ſo much animoſity, againſt thoſe whom he attacks, diſcredits himſelf, and loſes the confidence of the reader.

Such are the thoughts of a lover of ſolitary wiſdom, ſecluded in his ſmall vineyard, in which he meditates, like others, on the follies of men; and eſpecially on the ſtrange and ridiculous opinions, which have entered their imaginations. There does he offer up his prayers to Nature, that the neceſſary chain of cauſes may long maintain your organiſed being free from infirmity, ſuffering, and diſſolution.

On which I pray, &c,

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LETTER LVII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, June, 8, 1770.

IN the ſtate of weakneſs, and almoſt of imbecility, to which it has pleaſed Nature to reduce me, it is at leaſt ſome conſolation for me to learn that your majeſty is cured of your diſeaſe, and that you are kind enough to take part in my afflictions. The work you have deigned to ſend me is the worthy and fortunate produce of your convaleſcence: but I am unacquainted with the Eſſay on Prejudices, which your majeſty has taken the trouble to refute. I know however that the book has made its appearance at Paris, and that it even ſells there at a high price. But it is ſufficient for a book to treat on certain ſubjects, and properly or improperly to attack certain people, to make it ſought for with avidity, and give it more conſequence than it merits; becauſe of the precautions which government takes, to prevent the circulation of ſuch kind of works: precautions that often confer an honour on the author which he himſelf does not merit. With reſpect to myſelf, I have ſeen ſo many books and pamphlets againſt what Voltaire calls * * * that I have long forborne to read

read any more; and I am ſometimes tempted to ſay, of the title of philoſopher, as Jack Roaſt-beef does of that of Monſieur (Eſquire) in the comedy of *Le Francois à Londres* *, "I wo'nt be "ſo call'd; there are too many raſcals who aſ-"ſume that title."

The criticiſm which your majeſty has written, on the Eſſay on Prejudices, gives me ſtill leſs deſire to read this than other rhapſodies of the ſame kind. We may ſay of all our ſcribblers, againſt ſuperſtition and deſpotiſm, what the Jeſuit father De la Rue ſaid of his fellow Jeſuit Le Tellier—"He drives us ſo faſt that he will over-"turn us."—Philoſophy ſhould not amuſe itſelf with abuſing the clergy; as your majeſty has obſerved, it ſhould endeavour to render religion uſeful, by making it conducive to the happineſs of the people; and it ſhould teach ſovereigns their true intereſts, and ſubjects their duty, that it might render authority more mild, and obedience more exact.

It is great folly to accuſe philoſophers, at leaſt thoſe who merit the name, of preaching the doctrine of levellers. Such equality is an impoſſible chimæra, in all ſtates whatever. The true equality between citizens conſiſts in rendering them all equally ſubject to the laws, and equally pu-

* The Frenchman in London, by De Boiſſy. T.

niſhable

niſhable when the laws are infringed. Such is the practice in all well-governed kingdoms, in which the ſuperior never has the power to oppreſs his inferior with impunity. But unfortunately all kingdoms are not ſo governed. Of this the author perhaps has been a witneſs; and it may be this which has ſo violently heated his gall, againſt thoſe who govern. I have been a ſpectator, like himſelf, of nearly the ſame things; but I have beheld them with more phlegm, and have concluded that thoſe who govern and thoſe who are governed are often equally reprehenſible; and that each claſs of the human ſpecies has no juſt reproaches to make to the other.

I ſay for example that, if kings have often undertaken unjuſt wars, republics as your majeſty well obſerves have as often done the ſame; and in particular I regard the Roman republic, which is ſo much celebrated, as one of the greateſt ſcourges that have ever afflicted humanity. To this reflection I ſhall add nothing, except that I have admired the moderation with which your majeſty has expreſſed yourſelf, concerning the war of 1756. All you have ſaid on this ſubject, on that of the neceſſity of wars, and on that of taxation, appears to me full of good ſenſe and reaſon: but there is a want of a fund of equity, for the application of theſe principles; and

and of ſuch a fund as, unfortunately, men in power do not always poſſeſs.

I ſhould ſay more on the ſubject, were the limits of a letter ſufficient for the nice details of which it is ſuſceptible: as they are not, I ſhall be ſatisfied with praying the Holy Ghoſt to enlighten kings and nations; and eſpecially long to preſerve your majeſty, for the example of the one and the happineſs of the other.

I am, with the moſt profound reſpect, &c.

LETTER LVIII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, July 6, 1770.

I VENTURE to hope your majeſty will pardon the liberty I take, and that reſpectful confidence your goodneſs has inſpired, which encourages me to requeſt a new favour.

A conſiderable ſociety of philoſophers and men of letters, of whoſe number I am one, have determined, ſire, to erect a ſtatue to M. de Voltaire; as the perſon to whom, of all our writers, philoſophy and letters are moſt indebted.

Philoſophers and men of letters, of all nations,

tions, and particularly of the French nation, have long regarded you, ſire, as their chief, and their model. How flattering, therefore, and how honourable will it be to us, on the preſent occaſion, if your majeſty will be pleaſed to permit your auguſt and reſpectable name to ſtand at the head of ours! It will beſtow on M. de Voltaire, whoſe works you value ſo highly, a moſt precious and public mark of eſteem, by which he will be infinitely affected, and which will render the remainder of his life dear to his recollection. It will add greatly to the fame of this celebrated author, and to that of French literature, the gratitude of which will be eternal.

Permit me, ſire, to add that, in the feeble ſtate to which my labours have reduced me, and which no longer permit me to beſtow any thing but good wiſhes on letters, the new mark of diſtinction which I have dared to aſk, in their favour, will to me be the ſweeteſt conſolation. It will, if poſſible, increaſe the admiration I feel for your perſon, the profound ſentiment which I ſhall during life preſerve of your bounty, and the tender veneration with which I ſhall, to my laſt ſigh, remain, &c.

LET-

LETTER LIX.

From the King.

July 7, 1770.

I AM very ſorry to hear you are ſtill in ſo languid a ſtate. The ſummer ſeaſon is generally a reſtorative to bodies, and imparts thoſe powers which they had been deprived of, by the diſeaſes of winter. I hoped the ſame benefit would have accrued to you in the ſpring; and I imagine that the bad weather which has happened this year, at that ſeaſon, is the cauſe that you are not better. I think that ſome mineral waters, or baths, may entirely reſtore you; but of this the faculty muſt decide.

Scarcely had I ſent you my remarks, on that Eſſay on Prejudices, before another book fell into my hands; and, as I was in the train of examining philoſophical works, and of writing, I committed my obſervations to paper, and ſend them to you. The book I mean is the *Syſtême de la Nature*; and my endeavour has been to refute the moſt palpable contradictions, and the falſe reaſonings, which appear to me moſt ſtriking. Many things remain to be ſaid on the ſubject; and there are various details into which

I have not time to enter. I have chiefly confined myſelf to the four principal points, on which the author treats.

As to the firſt, in which he pretends that blind unintelligent nature, by the aid of motion, is all-productive, I believe it will be impoſſible for him to maintain any ſuch opinion, in contradiction to the objections I have made. With reſpect to the ſecond, which relates to the doctrine of neceſſity, further anſwers might be given; for, in my opinion, of all metaphyſical queſtions, that is the moſt difficult to reſolve. I propoſe to temporiſe, which is an idea that has ſeduced me, and which perhaps may be very true. I take the mid-way between freedom and neceſſity. I ſet great limits to the freedom of man, but ſtill I leave him that part which the common experience of human actions would not allow me to refuſe. The two remaining queſtions relate to religion and government.

There are beſide an infinite number of paſſages in the work, concerning which the author is liable to attack. He affirms, dogmatically enough, that the ſum total of good is greater than the ſum total of evil. My opinion and his on this ſubject differ; and it would be impoſſible for him to prove his propoſition, were it diſputed with ſome warmth. In fine, collecting

my

my remarks, I ſuppoſed myſelf a doctor of the Sorbonne, a pillar of the church; St. Auguſtin; but, after reading what I had thrown upon paper, I found myſelf exceedingly heterodox, and diſcovered my propoſitions to be offenſive, heretical, and worthy the thunder of the Vatican. My conſolation however is that, if I am liable to be well cooked in the other world, my adverſary ſhall at leaſt be doubly parboiled, fried, and roaſted.

I cannot comprehend how authors can be found thoughtleſs enough to publiſh ſuch works, which expoſe them to real misfortunes. Should the writer of the Syſtem of Nature, by any accident, be diſcovered in France, the leaſt that could happen to him would be to paſs the remainder of his life in the Baſtile; and that for having enjoyed the pleaſure of ſpeaking all he thought. We ought to be ſatisfied with thinking for ourſelves, and ſhould give a free courſe to vulgar opinions. I cannot imagine what can have raiſed the indignation of the author againſt the government of France. Many things may paſs in that kingdom; of which, becauſe of the diſtance at which I live, I may be uninformed. I am perſuaded acts of violence and injuſtice are committed, which ought to fall under the chaſtiſement of government; but let it be well re-

membered that, when four or ſix thouſand, or in fine, when a multitude of men have agreed to deceive one man, ſuch things infallibly happen. They happen in all countries, and all ages, and will always do the ſame; unleſs the human ſpecies ſhould be melted down, by ſome able chemiſt, and philoſophers ſhould intermingle ſome other ſubſtance in the compoſition.

We ſhould be firſt certain that the man is guilty, and accuſation ſhould then follow; but the accuſer is often too precipitate. It is good that men ſhould have ſome archetype, ſome model of perfection, in view; becauſe they depart from ſuch model but too much, and the idea is even effaced from the mind. Still however they will never arrive at perfection; for, unfortunately, it is incompatible with our nature. To this aſſertion I continually recur, my dear D'Alembert; and thence conclude that thoſe who ſincerely labour for the good of ſociety act like your defunct abbé de St. Pierre, and dream like honeſt men. This opinion does not prevent me from labouring, in that ſmall ſphere in which chance has placed me, to render thoſe who inhabit it happy, and the experience of affairs which daily paſs through my hands informs me what are the difficulties. Believe me, my friend, the man who could teach you to digeſt

digeſt well would be more uſeful to the world than the philoſopher, who ſhould baniſh all prejudices. I wiſh you ſuch a phyſician, moſt ſincerely; for no perſon is more intereſted in your preſervation, nor eſteems you more than he who—

Prays God to take you into his holy keeping.

LETTER LX.

From the King.

July 28, 1770.

THE fineſt monument to Voltaire is that which Voltaire has erected to himſelf; his works; which will ſubſiſt longer than the baſilick of St. Peter, the Louvre, and all the buildings which human vanity has dedicated to eternity. When French ſhall no longer be ſpoken, Voltaire ſhall be tranſlated into the language that ſhall ſucceed the French.

Full however of the pleaſure which his various productions have afforded me, each ſo perfect in its kind, I cannot, without being ungrateful, refuſe agreeing to the propoſal you make me, and contributing to the monument which

public gratitude ſhall erect. You have but to inform me of what is required of me: I ſhall refuſe nothing in behalf of this ſtatue, which will do more honour to the men of letters, who erect it, than it will to Voltaire. It will be ſaid that, in this eighteenth century, during which ſo many men of letters diſhonoured each other by their quarrels, others were found ſufficiently noble and generous to render juſtice to a man, endowed with talents and genius ſuperior to all ages; it will be added we deſerved to poſſeſs Voltaire, and the moſt diſtant poſterity will envy us this advantage. To diſtinguiſh celebrated men, to render juſtice to merit, and to encourage talents and virtue, are the ſole rewards that can be beſtowed on genius; rewards due to all that cultivate letters with ſuperior ſucceſs. The pleaſures of the mind are more durable than thoſe of the body, and literature ſoftens the moſt ferocious manners, imparts a charm to the life of man, and renders exiſtence ſupportable and death leſs terrible.

Continue therefore to protect and to celebrate thoſe who apply themſelves to letters; and who in France have the good fortune to ſucceed. This, gentlemen, will be the greateſt honour you can do your nation; and will obtain pardon, in future ages, for ſome Gaul-like and ſavage acts,

acts, which might otherwiſe be remembered, to the diſadvantage of your country.

Adieu, my dear D'Alembert: continue in good health, till a ſtatue ſhall, in turn, be erected to your memory.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER LXI.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, Auguſt 2, 1770.

THOUGH the feeble ſtate of my mind continue the ſame, and will not ſuffer me to examine thoſe abſtract queſtions into which your majeſty enters, with ſuch facility and depth, I ſtill cannot longer defer returning my moſt humble thanks, for the eſſay you have done me the honour to ſend me, on the *Syſtême de la Nature*; nor to communicate thoſe obſervations to which that excellent work gave birth, in my mind: obſervations which I ſubmit to the judgment of your majeſty, and which will much rather tend to confirm than combat your majeſty's opinions.

Nothing can be more ſage, in my apprehen-

ſion, nothing more true, than the reflections with which your majeſty begins, relative to the incertitude of metaphyſical knowledge. The motto of Montaigne—*What know I?*—ſeems to be the anſwer which ſhould be made to every queſtion of this kind; and in particular with reſpect to the exiſtence of the Supreme Intelligence. I think that thoſe who deny ſuch exiſtence affirm much more than they are able to prove; and that no rational opinions can be entertained on the ſubject, thoſe of ſcepticiſm excepted.

It cannot be denied, no doubt, that in the univerſe, and in particular in the formation of animals and plants, there is a combination of parts, which ſeems to declare an Intelligent Combiner. They prove his exiſtence, like as a watch proves the exiſtence of a watchmaker. This appears to be inconteſtable. But what anſwer ſhall be given, when we would proceed, and enquire what this Intelligence is; when we aſk has it created, or does it only model, matter? Is creation poſſible? And, if it be not, is matter therefore eternal? If matter be eternal, and has only need of mind for the modelling of it, is that mind a part of, or is it diſtinct from, matter? How can we conceive an *immaterial* being, acting upon matter? Add to which, if this

this Intelligence be infinitely wiſe and infinitely powerful, how does this unfortunate world, which is his work, happen to be ſo full of phyſical imperfections, and moral horrors? Why are not men juſt and happy?

Your majeſty replies that the eternity of the world is a ſolution of the difficulty; and, in my opinion, a ſolution no doubt it is: but in this ſenſe, and this only, that, the world being eternal and conſequently a thing of neceſſity, whatever is cannot be otherwiſe. And thus we plunge into the ſyſtem of abſolute neceſſity, which but ill agrees with the idea of an omniſcient and omnipotent God. When all theſe queſtions, ſire, are aſked, I cannot but think we ſhould a hundred times repeat—"*What know I?*" But we ought at the ſame time to conſole ourſelves, for ignorance, by recollecting that, ſince we are unable to know more, it is a proof that no more knowledge is neceſſary for us.

Nothing, ſire, can be more juſt, or more philoſophic, than the definition your majeſty has given of freedom: and it ſeems to me that, if men would be at the trouble of underſtanding each other, they would avoid many diſputes, on this ſubject. Man is free, thus. In actions which are not mechanical, he determines for himſelf,

himſelf, without conſtraint: but, on the contrary, although he determine voluntarily and by choice, there is always ſomething which induces him to determine, and which makes the balance incline to the ſide he takes.

I farther agree with your majeſty that the philoſopher who believes in neceſſity, and makes that doctrine the baſis of his work, ought to regard criminal perſons as unfortunate, and more worthy of compaſſion than hatred. But I do not think that, in a ſyſtem in which men are machines, ſubjected to the laws of fate, chaſtiſement on one part and the ſtudy of morality on the other are uſeleſs to ſuch a ſociety: for, even in the man-machine, fear and intereſt are the two great regulators, the two principal wheels which contribute to the action of the machine; and, of theſe two regulators, the firſt is put in motion by the puniſhment inflicted on the guilty, and which ſerves to curb thoſe who are likewiſe inclined to guilt; and the ſecond by morality, well underſtood, the ſtudy of which convinces us that our firſt intereſt is to be virtuous and juſt; as your majeſty has ſo well proved, in your excellent tract on this ſubject.

I ſhall readily agree with your majeſty concerning the chriſtian religion, the morality of which is no doubt excellent, and to which it

ſhould

ſhould have been confined; but its dogmas, and intolerant principles, have been exceedingly injurious to the morality with which they are amalgamated. I repeat, its intolerant principles; becauſe it appears to me an inevitable conſequence of a religion which pretends to be excluſive, like the chriſtian religion, and to teach the ſole manner in which the Deity can be worſhipped, that it ſhould eſtabliſh itſelf by all poſſible means; even by employing violence, when force and violence aré in its power. This is the reaſon that the chriſtian religion has ſhed ſuch rivers of blood; nor can I avoid regarding it, in this reſpect, as one of the greateſt plagues that ever afflicted humanity.

I ſhall only ſpeak a word on government, ſire. I think that the form of government is a thing indifferent, provided the government itſelf be juſt; that citizens of all ranks equally claim its protection; that they equally ſubmit to its laws; are equally puniſhed, when thoſe are violated; and that puniſhment be not reſerved for petty guilt, and honours for the great.

What relates to Louis XIV. would give birth to much diſcuſſion, were we to enquire whether he did good or harm to his kingdom; and whether likewiſe he were not the ſcourge of

Europe, by ſetting an example to other princes of thoſe numerous armies which the moſt ſage are at preſent obliged to maintain, the individuals of which would certainly more willingly employ themſelves in trade and agriculture, were they not under the wretched neceſſity of remaining in their preſent ſtate.

I am well perſuaded your majeſty will be of my opinion, and am, &c.

LETTER LXII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, Auguſt 12, 1770.

I DID not loſe a moment to inform M. de Voltaire of the ſignal honour your majeſty is pleaſed to confer on him; and, in his perſon, on the literature and the nation of France. I have no doubt he will himſelf teſtify, to your majeſty, the warmth and duration of his gratitude. But where ſhall I find words to expreſs mine? What language will convey my feelings, at reading the great, the noble eulogium, which your majeſty has beſtowed on philoſophy, and philoſophers? I took the liberty, and I dare

hope your majeſty will not be angry with me, to impart the contents of your letter, to all thoſe who were worthy of being auditors: nor can I poſſibly repeat to your majeſty how much they admired, and how reſpectfully they revered, the union of ſo much juſtice, goodneſs, and glory! You, ſire, are the chief and the model, of all who think and write. You are at preſent (I will employ your majeſty's own words) their avenging and their rewarding deity. For the recompenſe beſtowed on genius is the puniſhment of thoſe by whom genius is perſecuted. Would that your majeſty's letter were to be engraved on the pedeſtal of the ſtatue! It would be more flattering to M. de Voltaire, and to literature, than the ſtatue itſelf.

As to myſelf, to whom, ſire, you have been pleaſed to ſpeak alſo of a ſtatue, I have not the impertinent vanity to imagine I merit any ſuch monument. I only requeſt a ſtone may be laid over my grave, with theſe words —— THE GREAT FREDERIC BESTOWED ON HIM HIS FAVOURS, AND HIS BENEFITS.

Your majeſty aſks what we deſire of you for this monument.—A crown piece, ſire, and your name.—The latter your majeſty has been pleaſed to grant, in a worthy and generous manner. Marſhal de Richelieu has given twenty guineas.

guineas. We are in no want of ſubſcriptions, but without yours they will be ineffectual; and, whatever it ſhall pleaſe your majeſty to give, we ſhall with gratitude receive.

Permit me to take this opportunity of thanking your majeſty, for the favour you have granted M. Cochius, by appointing him a member of the academy, and allowing him a penſion. His reſpect and attachment for your perſon, his merit and his want of fortune, render him worthy of your majeſty's bounty.

I will at the ſame time venture once more to recommend to this bounty M. Beguelin, who, in the memoirs of the academy, has juſt publiſhed ſome excellent enquiries concerning achromatic teleſcopes, well calculated to render them more perfect. Beſide the eſteem in which I hold his talents, I am gratefully indebted to him for ſome excellent remarks, which he has made on one of my eſſays, relative to the ſame ſubject.

I am, with the moſt profound reſpect, the livelieſt gratitude, &c.

P. S. The French academy have unanimouſly voted that the letter, with which your majeſty has been pleaſed to honour me, ſhall be inſerted in their regiſters; as a monument honourable to

M. de

M. de Voltaire, and to letters; and have charged me, ſire, to lay their humble gratitude, and profound reſpect, at your majeſty's feet.

LETTER LXIII.

From the King.

Auguſt 18, 1770.

I THINK your phyſicians a very amiable body, and ſhould be very glad if mine reſembled them; but, in this country, they preſcribe nothing to their patients better than drops, and moſt abominable drugs. Not but your phyſicians have been miſtaken. Had I been at Paris, in a wig ſufficiently large and powdered, and you had conſulted me, I ſhould have preſcribed the air of Pruſſia, as the moſt proper for your cure. But, as I am no doctor, I am obliged to have faith in thoſe who are privileged to laugh at, or to abuſe, their patients.

I am departing for Sileſia, and Moravia. At my return, the ſum you demand ſhall be paid at Paris. It is a kind of conſolation to me that theſe ſo much vilified kings may be of ſome utility

utility to philoſophers. They are at leaſt good for ſomething.

Farewel, dear D'Alembert. I will tell you more on my return.

LETTER LXIV.

From the King.

September 26, 1770.

I Certainly did not expect that my Teutonic letter ſhould be read by the French academy, in full aſſembly. The abbé D'Olivet would have eſpied more than one ſoleciſm; but, fortunately for the author of the letter, the abbé D'Olivet had bidden this world adieu, before it was written. I pardon your having ſhewn it, becauſe it contains ſome truths, which are as proper to be heard as to be ſpoken. Talents no doubt ought to be diſtinguiſhed, eſpecially when they riſe to ſupereminence. Great minds labour only for fame, and it would be treating them ſeverely to let them always hope for, yet never enjoy, the thing of which they are in ſearch. The penalties annexed to all ranks of mankind can only be ſoftened by this balm, a little

little of which is neceſſary, even to the greateſt men.

I imagine that, at preſent, you are on your road for Italy; and I have juſt ended a long and fatiguing journey, which I have diſpatched with tolerable ſpeed. I mean to take a little reſt, after which I intend to anſwer your very philoſophic letter, which I have juſt received; and the rather becauſe one of your doctors has informed us that the greateſt affront the theologian can ſuſtain is to have nothing to reply. Something therefore muſt be ſaid; and I have fortunately found, in my warehouſe, a collection of diſtinctions, and ſubtleties, ſufficient for an anſwer and its duplicate; after which, an it pleaſe Heaven, we will neither of us underſtand the other; and from that moment the diſpute will become intereſting. I am very much of your opinion that, after having long diſcuſſed theſe abſtruſe ſubjects, we ſhall be obliged to recur to the "*What know I*" of Montaigne.

Your comptroller of finances has aſſured me that he has provided for the expences of your journey, as well as for the buſt of Voltaire. Mettra will pay two hundred crowns for that purpoſe; ſo that the ſcull and the brain may certainly be mine, and the remainder I leave to the other ſubſcribers.

Adieu, my dear Anaxagoras. May you return ſafe and ſound to Paris, and may your phyſician next year preſcribe the air of Berlin!

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER LXV.

From the King.

October 18, 1770.

MY journey into Moravia, the camps aſſembled in thoſe environs, and the viſit I have received from the electreſs of Saxony, are ſufficient excuſes for not having anſwered you, on ſubjects which neither you nor I ſhall ever well underſtand. I have ſince given ſome reſt to my mind, that it might collect itſelf, after the diſſipation of the great world, and recover its philoſophic tone.

You oblige me to tilt with you in the dark, and to exclaim—"Great Jove! Afford us but "light, and be thou our opponent*."

But, ſince the labyrinth muſt be entered, nothing but the clue of reaſon can be my guide. This reaſon, ſhewing me the aſtoniſhing relations that exiſt between the works of nature,

* See note, vol. vi. p. 239.

and

and making me obſerve final cauſes ſo ſtriking and ſo evident, obliges me to allow that an Intelligent Being preſides over the univerſe, to maintain the general arrangement of the machine. I repreſent this intelligence to myſelf, as the principle of life and motion.

The ſyſtem of a chaos reduced to order appears to me falſe; for more power would be requiſite for the reduction and ſupport of this chaos, than for the arrangement of things, as they at preſent exiſt.

The ſyſtem of a world created out of nothing is contradictory, conſequently abſurd. Nothing therefore remains but the eternity of the earth, an idea which, as it implies no contradiction, appears to me the moſt probable; becauſe what is to day may have been yeſterday, and ſo forth. Since man is a material, thinking, and moving being, I can ſee no reaſon why a ſimilar, thinking, and active principle may not be annexed to matter, univerſally. I do not call this principle ſpirit, becauſe I can form no idea of a being which does not occupy ſpace, and which conſequently does not exiſt. But, as thought is the reſult of the organization of the body of man, why may not the world, infinitely more organized than man, poſſeſs an intelligence infinitely ſuperior to that of ſo frail a creature?

This intelligence, co-eternal with the world, cannot, according to my conception, change the nature of things. It cannot render that which is heavy light; it cannot make froſt and fire the ſame. Subjected to laws which are invariable, it can but combine, and employ matter according as its intrinſic conſtitution is inclined. The elements, for example, have certain principles, and can only exiſt ſuch as they are.

If it ſhould hence be inferred that the world, being eternal, exiſts of neceſſity, and that conſequently all exiſting things are ſubjected to the ſame neceſſity, I think I ought not to ſubſcribe to that propoſition. It appears to me that Nature has confined herſelf to the endowment of the elements with ſtable and eternal properties, and with ſubjecting motion to permanent laws, which no doubt conſiderably influence, without being entirely deſtructive of freedom. The organization and the paſſions of men originate in the elements of which they are compoſed. As often as they obey theſe paſſions, they are ſlaves; but free as often as they reſiſt.

Here you will attack me, and ſay—Do you not perceive that the reaſon with which they reſiſt their paſſions is ſubjected to that neceſſity which occaſions this reaſon to act upon them? Rigorouſly ſpeaking, this may be true; but he who

who chooſes, and decides, between reaſon and paſſion, ſeems to me to be free; or I know not what idea to annex to the word freedom. Whatever is neceſſary is abſolute; therefore, if man be rigorouſly ſubjected to neceſſity, no puniſhment or reward can ſhake or deſtroy this tranſcendent conqueror: but, as experience proves the contrary, it muſt be allowed that man ſometimes enjoys freedom, though often limited. If you require me, my dear Diagoras, more circumſtantially to explain what this intelligence is, which I have married to matter, I muſt beg you to grant me a diſpenſation. I have a glimpſe of ſuch an intelligence, as of an object confuſedly ſeen in a fog. To divine it is much; but to be acquainted with and to define it is not given to man. I am like Columbus, who ſuſpected the exiſtence of a new world, but who left to others the glory of the diſcovery *.

After a confeſſion ſo ſincere, you will not tell me that childiſh prejudices have induced me to embrace the defence of the chriſtian religion, againſt a fanatic philoſopher, who attacks it with ſo much animoſity. Permit me to ſay that our ſects, at preſent, as little reſemble the religion

* The king ſeems ſtrangely to have forgotten himſelf; unleſs he alludes to America being called after Amerigo Veſpucci. T.

of Chriſt as they do that of the Iroquois. Jeſus was a Jew, and Chriſtians burn the Jews. Jeſus preached patience, and Chriſtians perſecute. Jeſus taught good morality, which Chriſtians do not practiſe. Jeſus eſtabliſhed no dogmatical opinions, and Chriſtian councils have provided good ſtore. In fine, the Chriſtians of the third century bore no reſemblance to the Chriſtians of the firſt. Jeſus was an Eſſenian, and had imbibed the morality of the Eſſenians, which greatly reſembled that of Zeno. His religion was pure deiſm; how it has been embroidered by us you well know.

Theſe things being ſo, by defending the morality of Chriſt I do but defend that of all philoſophers. With reſpect to the opinions which are not thoſe of Chriſt, them I give up to your diſcretion. Prieſts having remarked the power their ideal credit acquired them, over the minds of the vulgar, made religion ſubſervient to ambition. But, though their politics have disfigured what in its inſtitution was not amiſs, this proves nothing more than that the Chriſtian religion has undergone the fate of all ſublunary things; it has been perverted.

When therefore we would exclaim againſt this religion, we ought to indicate the age of which we ſpeak; and to diſtinguiſh between its abuſes and its inſtitution. But, be its doctrines what

what they may, the vulgar are attached to them from habit. The ſame may be ſaid of certain exterior practices: whoever attacks them, without mercy, excites the vulgar indignation.

What then can be done?—Preſerve morality; reform that which needs reformation; inſtruct men in power, who influence government; overwhelm ſuperſtition with ridicule; laugh at abſurd opinions; ſtifle bigotry, that the minds of men may be led to univerſal toleration. The religion of a nation would then be of ſmall importance.

After having ſaid what I do and what I do not know, concerning God, I will detain you a moment, on the ſubject of one of his earthly images, Louis XIV. who was too much praiſed during his life, and after death too bitterly criticiſed.

You accuſe this monarch of having been the firſt to give the example of thoſe numerous armies which are at preſent maintained. Do you not recollect that this cuſtom, long before his time, had been introduced by the Romans? Suppoſe yourſelf in his place. He foreſaw that the jealouſy of his neighbours would continually incite wars againſt him, and he did not wiſh to be taken unprovided. He perceived the royal houſe of Spain on the eve of becoming extinct; and was it no his duty to prepare that he might

profit by ſuch favourable circumſtances, if opportunity ſhould offer? Was it not in fact a proof of his forethought and wiſdom, to be thus previouſly provided? And, after all, great armies do not depopulate countries, nor deprive induſtry of its arms. There can only be a certain number of huſbandmen, in any country, in proportion to the lands they have to cultivate; and a certain number of artificers, in proportion to the extent of their trade. The ſurplus will become beggars, or thieves.

Beſide, numerous armies occaſion a circulation of money, through the provinces, with equal diſtribution; by which means the ſubſidies, furniſhed to government, are returned to the pockets of the people. The expenſive ſupport of armies ſhortens the duration of wars. Inſtead of thirty years, which ſomething above a century ago they continued, monarchs, being exhauſted, are obliged to terminate them ſooner. In our times, ſeven or eight campaigns, at the furtheſt, empty the treaſuries of kings and render them pacific and tractable.

We muſt farther obſerve that, by ſuch large armies, conditions * are more definitively fixed than

* The conditions of peace, I ſhould have imagined to be the meaning of his majeſty; becauſe the phraſe *les conditions* would ſcarcely have been employed by a Frenchman, to ſignify

than they formerly were. Neither the labourer, the manufacturer, the lawyer, nor the man of learning, leave their employment, at preſent, at the ſound of the trumpet, but tranquilly continue their uſual occupations, leaving the revenge of their country to its defenders. Formerly troops were haſtily raiſed on the firſt alarm; each man became a ſoldier. Nothing was thought of but how to repulſe the foe. The fields remained fallow, trade became ſtagnate, and ſoldiers were ill paid, ill provided, and ill diſciplined: they exiſted only by rapine, acting like banditti, in the unfortunate countries which became the ſeat of their depredations. All this is changed. Not that there are not vile pilferers, in ſome armies; but ſuch exceſſes bear no compariſon to thoſe which formerly exiſted. For theſe reaſons, you will permit me to ſuſpend my judgment, concerning the maintenance of great armies, till you ſhall furniſh me with better arguments for their aboliſhment. Politics no doubt proceed on rules different from thoſe of metaphyſics; though there are

nify the various occupations of men: *états* is the word generally uſed to expreſs this idea. The following ſentence however ſeems to denote, though not with certainty, that the ranks of mankind, and not political treaties, is the true ſignification. T.

ſome

ſome as ſtrictly demonſtrated as any of the theorems of geometry.

All this, my dear Diagoras, does not diminiſh my eſteem for you. Though we differ in opinion, we need not hate, and eſpecially not perſecute. I have refuted the author of the *Syſtême de la Nature*, becauſe I was not convinced by his reaſoning: If however men were to attempt to burn him, I would carry water to extinguiſh the fire. Such ought to be our thoughts, when we interfere with philoſophic ſubjects, or we muſt renounce the title of philoſopher.

Take notice that, if we farther continue our diſputes, concerning God and neceſſity, we ſhall have the misfortune no longer to underſtand each other. I can only repeat ſuch remarks as my own obſervation and probability have furniſhed. Theſe are to us only ſubjects of amuſement, and vain curioſity; they fortunately have no influence on our peace of mind. The grand article is to be in good health. May your journey reſtore their primitive elaſticity to your organs! May diſſipation diſperſe the fogs of melancholy, which have ariſen in your mind; that, ſuffering leſs under the fatal influence of matter, you may freely yield to the impulſe of your vaſt genius!

On which I pray, &c.

LET-

LETTER LXVI.

From the King.

November 1, 1770.

YOU and Voltaire laugh at my expence, when you tell me you ſuppoſe me of uſe to the progreſs of philoſophy. Deſcartes, Newton, Bayle, D'Alembert and Voltaire have imparted luſtre to ſcience. For my part, I am only what the Italians call a *dilettante*. I ſeat myſelf with other amateurs in the pit, and applaud beauties. My whole merit conſiſts in clapping, in proper places.

You muſt have received an enormous epiſtle from me, in which I have employed every weapon my metaphyſical arſenal of arguments could ſupply. There is but one of theſe abſtract ſubjects capable of demonſtration, which is that of materialiſm; and, this being well proved, we muſt ſatisfy ourſelves with different degrees of probability, concerning ſuch others as become objects of ſpeculation, or of amuſement, to thoſe who think proper thus to exerciſe their fancy; and of exerciſe to ſuch as wiſh to improve in preciſion. After all, good digeſtion is of more impor-

importance, to mankind, than the knowledge of the eſſence of things.

I congratulate you, on having found benefit by the exerciſe of travelling. Your health perhaps would have been entirely reſtored, had you taken the whole doſe. What! See yourſelf at the foot of the Alps, and return to the land of Oc*, inſtead of viſiting that theatre of great deeds (contemptible indeed in its preſent ſtate) on which that king of nations acted whom the known world obeyed! What a pleaſure muſt it have been, to you, to contemplate the crowd of quacks whoſe leaders have brought their drugs into diſcredit; to behold them, I ſay, on their tottering ſtages, without one auditor attending to their mummery.

Inſtead of a ſpectacle ſo grand, you are going to be preſent, at Thouloufe, at a banquet of cannibals, where men continue to celebrate the anniverſary of a barbarous murder. At Aix, you will meet the relations of thoſe who gave orders for the maſſacre of Mérindal; and, on your road, you will find the faggots ſtill ſmoking, amid which ſo many wretches were de-

* *Chez le peuple d'Oc.*—The king alludes to Occitania, the name by which the province of Languedoc was known in the lower age, and to the capital of which he immediately afterward tells us D'Alembert was going. T.

voured by the flames. Oh! How preferable is Italy to Provence! The cordelier, Ganganelli, is become accuſtomed to the motion of the earth; he tacitly conſents it ſhould turn, and you would not have had the fate of Galileo to fear, at Rome.

Philoſopher as you are, however, take care how you diſobey the faculty. Phyſicians are infallible; like the Pope, at the head of an œcumenic council. I beg you will impreſs this truth ſtrongly on your mind, that, if they ſhould preſcribe a journey to Berlin, to reſtore the active powers of your ſtomach, you may not fail to undertake it; and eſpecially that you may not repent, when you have travelled as far as Weſtphalia.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER LXVII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, November 26, 1770.

ON my arrival at Paris, three days ſince, I found three letters; with which I have been honoured

honoured by your majeſty, during my journey, and which could not be ſent me; becauſe, having travelled about five hundred leagues in two months, going and coming, and conſequently having made no long ſtay in any place, it was difficult to addreſs them to me, with ſafety. I therefore firſt humbly entreat your majeſty will excuſe me, that I have not had the honour to anſwer ſooner. You will perceive that this at leaſt was the firſt duty of which I acquitted myſelf, after a few moments of repoſe, which were indiſpenſably neceſſary.

I next entreat you will, for ſome days longer, permit me to defer the anſwer I owe your moſt philoſophic and profound letter, dated Oct. 18. Such a letter, ſire, demands ſome time for reflection; that its propoſitions may be meditated, and diſcuſſed. With your majeſty's permiſſion, I ſhall therefore confine myſelf, at preſent, to anſwer your two other letters, dated September 26th and November 1ſt.

Your majeſty appears ſurpriſed that the letter of a German, which is the expreſſion you have been pleaſed to uſe, ſhould have been read at the French academy, in full aſſembly. But how can we apply the epithet German, to a ſovereign who writes ſuch letters; whether we regard the ſubject or the ſtyle? I cannot deſcribe

ſcribe to your majeſty how much my *living* aſſociates were penetrated, by admiration and gratitude. Their unanimous determination, to inſert the letter in the regiſters of the academy, is a ſufficient proof of the ſentiments it excited. As to the *defunct* abbé d'Olivet, I am perſuaded that, if his ghoſt had any knowledge of the tranſaction, it could not but grind its teeth, ſuppoſing that a ghoſt has any teeth, at not detecting one ſoleciſm.

All that your majeſty has had the goodneſs to ſay to me, concerning the fame due to genius, is worthy of a mind like yours, as equitable as it is elevated. This balm, as your majeſty calls it, is indeed moſt neceſſary to the greateſt men; and eſpecially to great men ſuffering perſecution. Superior talents held in little eſteem, in any country, greatly reſemble the indigent wretch who, having no meat, went and ſtood in the fumes that iſſued from a cook's ſhop while he ate his bread. Such fumes ſupport philoſophers in their labours: but they ceaſe to be ſmoke, and become real and ſolid food, when this manna proceeds from heros and princes, on whom the eyes of the age have been conſtantly fixed. I leave to your majeſty, or indeed to the whole world, rather than to your majeſty, the application of this maxim.

Your majeſty pretends that I and Voltaire divert ourſelves at your expence, when we deem you uſeful to the progreſs of philoſophy—Not uſeful, ſire, but more, exceedingly neceſſary—Neceſſary by your works, which ſerve at once to enlighten and inform; neceſſary from the example you give to ſovereigns, not to hide their candle under a buſhel, when to be admired it is only requiſite for it to be ſeen; and, in fine, neceſſary by the protection you grant all thoſe who endeavour to render their labours of utility. Such, ſire, are our thoughts, collectively. This is what we in concert ſay, at all times, and in all places; and which we never ceaſe to repeat; much leſs for the ſake of your fame than for our own encouragement, and conſolation.

Your majeſty would have been better pleaſed, had I gone to ſee our lady of Loretto, and the Recollet friars of the capitol, rather than the white, black, blue, grey, and red penitents, who are diſperſed over Languedoc. To a philoſopher, the ſight of the one is as good as the other; and, with reſpect to Veſuvius and St. Peter of Rome, I dreaded, ſire, after conſulting the phyſicians, and from the knowledge I had of my own want of ſtrength, that the fatigues of a journey of five hundred leagues, from Paris

to

to Naples, over the froſts and ſnows of the Alps and Apennines, on the worſt of all poſſible roads, where are the moſt deteſtable of inns. I dreaded, I ſay, that theſe would do my poor head more harm than good; and that the pleaſures which the beauties of nature and art in Italy would afford, would be inadequate to the danger. I durſt not even proceed to the farther part of Provence, becauſe of the unhealthy winds, the ill effects of which I had felt in Lower Languedoc, and which as I feared would but increaſe. I am now, ſire, returned to my houſehold gods; much rather fatigued than cured, but in ſome degree relieved, having gained ſtrength, and being not without hope of perfect recovery, this winter, with much regimen and exerciſe.

M. Mettra, at my departure, in money and bills, remitted me the ſum which your majeſty was pleaſed to grant, for my journey into Italy, not the half of which, ſire, I have expended; and I have returned three thouſand five hundred livres (one hundred and forty-five pounds ſterling) in bills, to M. Mettra, of which I had no need. He will conſequently expend this ſum on other objects, agreeable to your majeſty's orders. The more I am affected, by the goodneſs of your majeſty, the leſs ought I to abuſe your benefits.

During my journey, the public papers informed me of the death of one of the princes of Brunſwic, your majeſty's nephew. I hope your majeſty is convinced how ſincerely, and warmly, I participate in your affliction. Whatever can affect your majeſty will, to the end of life, be moſt intereſting to me.

In ſuch ſentiments, and with the moſt profound reſpect, I am, &c.

LETTER LXVIII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, November 30, 1770.

ONCE again, ſince your majeſty permits or rather requires me ſo to do, behold me enter the liſts of metaphyſics, much rather with than againſt your majeſty. It is not from reſpect only that I thus expreſs myſelf; for, after attentively conſidering your majeſty's opinions on theſe abſtruſe ſubjects, which I take the liberty to diſcuſs with you, my metaphyſics appear to me to differ, in reality, ſo little with yours, that our arguments ought not even to be called a con-

a controverſy, much leſs a diſpute*. I therefore take the liberty once more to converſe with your majeſty, on theſe dark queſtions, much rather for the ſake of information than of contradiction.

I firſt agree, with your majeſty, that there is a common principle; which appears as evident to me as it does to you. Creation is abſurd, and impoſſible. Matter is therefore not to be created, conſequently has not been created, conſequently is eternal. This reſult, however clear and neceſſary, will not well accord with the true partiſans of the exiſtence of a God, who inſiſt on an almighty, immaterial, and active intelligence. But this is of ſmall importance. We ſeek truth, and not their pleaſure. I afterward perceive, throughout the various parts of the ſyſtem of the world, and particularly in the formation of animals, traces, which at leaſt may be called ſtriking, of intelligence and deſign. We have therefore to enquire if there be, in effect, any real intelligence; and, if the affirmative be granted, to divine, if we are able, what that intelligence is.

I cannot doubt but that this intelligence is at

* We do not, in Engliſh, underſtand theſe words in a ſenſe ſo diſtinct from each other as they are here underſtood, by M. D'Alembert. T.

leaſt annexed to ſome parts of matter; for men and animals are my proofs. It is farther certain that it directs moſt of their motions, and is the principle of all the rational actions of man, and particularly of all that is great and admirable; ſuch as the invention of arts and ſciences.

Is this intelligence, exiſting in men and animals, diſtinct from, or only a property of, matter, dependent on organization?

Experience ſeems to prove, nay to demonſtrate, the latter; ſince intelligence increaſes and diminiſhes, according to the perfection or imperfection of organization.

But how may organization be productive of feeling and thought? In the human body, like as in rude matter, whether ſolid or fluid, we only perceive particles ſuſceptible of figure, motion, and reſt. Why is intelligence annexed to ſome particles, and not to others? Or why ſhould the latter ſeem unſuſceptible of intelligence? Theſe are queſtions to which we probably ſhall never find any ſolution. But, in ſpite of our ignorance, experience ſeems invincibly to prove to me, as to your majeſty, the materiality of mind; like as the moſt ſimple reaſoning proves eternal Being; though we neither can conceive Being that has eternally exiſted, nor Being that begins to exiſt.

We

We have now to examine whether that intelligence, dependent on the formation of matter, be expanded through all parts of matter.

This queſtion appears more difficult than the preceding. The bodies of animals excepted, all particles of matter, with which we are acquainted, appear to us deſtitute of feeling, intelligence, and thought. Can intelligence reſide in them unſuſpected by us? Of this there is no appearance; and I am much diſpoſed to believe, not only that a block of marble, but that other bodies*, however ingeniouſly and finely organized, neither think nor feel. Yet, it is anſwered, the organization of theſe bodies diſcovers viſible traces of intelligence. This I do not deny; but I wiſh to know what is become of that intelligence, after the bodies are formed. Was it reſident in them, during their formation? Did it reſide in them for their formation? And if, as is ſuppoſed, it be a thing diſtinct from them, what became of it when its work was performed? Is it annihilated by the perfection of organization, although neceſſary for its progreſs and concluſion? This ſeems difficult to conceive.

* *Les corps bruts.* The collective arguments of the author prove that he can mean nothing but plants, and vegetative nature, by the epithet *bruts*. T.

Beſide, if that intelligence, the effects and productions of which we admire, be in man the conſequence of organization only, why ſhould we not admit, in other parts of matter, a formation and propenſity as neceſſary and as natural as matter itſelf; whence ſhall reſult, without the interference of any intelligence, thoſe effects which, being ſeen, excite our ſurpriſe?

In fine, admitting an intelligence which has preſided at the formation of the world, and continues to preſide for its ſupport, we ſhall at laſt be obliged to own it is neither infinitely wiſe nor infinitely puiſſant; for wretched humanity is a teſtimony that this is far from the beſt of all poſſible worlds. We are therefore reduced, with the beſt of inclinations, to admit at moſt only of a material deity, confined and dependent. I know not whether it will ſatisfy him, but it certainly will not ſatisfy the zealous partiſans of the exiſtence of a God, who would rather ſee us atheiſts than diſciples of Spinoſa, as we are. To ſoften their anger, let us become ſceptics, and again repeat—"*What know I?*"

I ſhall now accompany your majeſty from darkneſs to darkneſs; and, ſince I have done myſelf the honour to plunge with you up to the neck, and even over head, in the abyſs, I ſhall proceed to the queſtion of freedom. It ſeems

to

to me that, in reality, I am of your majeſty's opinion, and that we have only to define the idea which we annex to the word freedom. If we underſtand by this word, as your majeſty ſeems to underſtand, an exemption from conſtraint and the exerciſe of the will, it is evident that we are free; ſince we act from ſelf-determination, wholly uncontrolled, and often with pleaſure. But ſuch determination is not leſs a neceſſary conſequence of the propenſity, equally neceſſary, of our organs; and of the effect, once again equally neceſſary, produced upon us by the action of other beings. If ſtones knew they were falling, and took a pleaſure in their fall, they would imagine the act to be free; becauſe they fell with their own conſent.

But I do not think, ſire, that, even on the ſyſtem of abſolute neceſſity, I ſhall find no difficulty to admit that reward and puniſhment are uſeleſs. They are only additional ſprings and regulators, requiſite to make the machine go, and to render it leſs imperfect. There would be more crimes in a world in which there ſhould be neither reward nor puniſhment; like as there would be more diſorder in a watch, which ſhould want ſome of its wheels.

Your majeſty kindly leads me by the hand through this labyrinth of philoſophic obſcurity;

but, thanks to you, ſire, at length I ſee the light, and arrive at an object reſpecting which I have the good fortune to be abſolutely of your opinion. I ſpeak of the nature and progreſs of the religion of Europe. It appears as evident to me as to your majeſty that Chriſtianity, in its origin, was pure deiſm; that its author, Jeſus Chriſt, was only a kind of philoſopher, the foe of ſuperſtition, of perſecution, and of prieſts; one who taught men benevolence and juſtice, and reduced all law to the love of our neighbour, and the adoration of God, in ſpirit and in truth. Such was the primitive ſtate of this religion. It was firſt St. Paul, afterward the fathers of the church, and the councils finally, which were unfortunately ſupported by kings, that changed this religion. I therefore think we ſhould do great ſervice to mankind, could we reduce Chriſtianity to its primitive ſtate, and confine ourſelves to preach to the people a rewarding and avenging God; who reproves ſuperſtition, deteſts intolerance, and who requires no other homage from men than that of love to each other, and mutual ſupport. For, having well inculcated theſe truths among the people, no great effort I think would be neceſſary to make them forget the opinions they have been taught; and which have been ſeized, with a kind of avidity,

avidity, only becauſe nothing better has been ſubſtituted. The multitude is no doubt a fooliſh animal, which ſuffers itſelf to be led into darkneſs, when no light ſhines. But offer this animal the truth, and if this truth be ſimple, and eſpecially if it appeal to the heart, as the religion which I propoſe to preach would, I think it muſt infallibly be embraced, and preferred to all other doctrine. Unfortunately, we are at preſent far diſtant from ſo happy a revolution in the opinions of men.

At length I come, ſire, to the monarch ſo much beloved, during his life, and perhaps too much decried after his death; but to whom men ſeem to begin to render what is due, without flattery, and without detraction. In ſpite of the advantage he has, of being defended by a prince in every reſpect much greater than himſelf, which at preſent is the opinion of all Europe, and which opinion will be ſtrengthened in future ages, I take the liberty, ſire, of ſaying of this monarch what La Fontaine ſaid of St. Paul, to his confeſſor—"Your St. Paul is no man for "me."

I will allow for every thing he has performed, of great and of uſeful; and will grant that the ſciences, arts, and letters are greatly indebted to him; but his wars, which often were moſt unjuſt,

juſt, his pride, his intolerant ſpirit, his revocation of the edict of Nantes, and his ſubjection to the Jeſuits, place a fearful counterpoiſe in the other ſcale.

With reſpect to the example he has given ſovereigns, of maintaining enormous armies, in order to be juſt, we muſt begin by allowing that, at preſent, it is impoſſible for the beſt informed monarchs to avoid following his example. It would be equally repugnant to reaſon, and the duties they owe their ſubjects, to remain unarmed, when the whole world is "clothed in "complete ſteel." But I take the liberty to aſk your majeſty whether you would not be better pleaſed, were you not thus conſtrained, to have a hundred thouſand huſbandmen more, and a hundred thouſand ſoldiers leſs? The firſt enrich, the latter expend.

I know great armies render wars of ſhorter duration, but poverty is the cauſe; and it appears to me better, if we have a hundred thouſand men to throw away, that they ſhould be ſquandered in twenty or in thirty years, rather than in ſix or ſeven.

I alſo grant great armies are the cauſe that we are not now, as formerly, obliged to beat up for ſoldiers, at the firſt firing of a gun. But might not a monarch, who ſhould be a warrior and

and no philoſopher, abuſe ſtanding armies, to make war as often and with as much levity as Louis XIV. reproached himſelf with having done, on his death bed? The money neceſſary for the maintenance of ſuch armies keeps Europe, even in times of peace, in a continual ſtate of tenſion, which is but little different from a continual ſtate of war.

I am at the end of my ſecond ſheet, and perceive, but a little too late, that I abuſe the patience and bounty of your majeſty. I therefore entreat you to pardon my dull prolixity, and to regard it as a conſequence of the wiſh I have to obtain information; and eſpecially as the teſtimony of the unalterable ſentiments, profound reſpect, and eternal gratitude with which, &c.

LETTER LXIX.

From the King.

December 2, 1770.

TO regain health in part is an advantage, and to find eaſe is a good. I therefore think I am not wrong in congratulating you, on the effect of the remedies preſcribed by your phyſicians

ſicians of Paris. I find you have not made any ſtay in the country of the old Troubadours, but that you are returned to the metropolis. Do not mention finance to me; it is a language which ſtrikes too often upon my ear, and I ſay with Pilate—"What is written is written."

I ſend you the dream of a philoſopher, againſt whom Voltaire is irritated. As I preſſed this philoſopher to learn whether the viſion were his own, he confeſſed that the little prophet Waldſtock, being here, had dropped it from his pocket, as he took out his handkerchief. You can return it him, for it is not in the order of things that my philoſopher ſhould take to himſelf what is not his due.

I thank you for your condolence on the death of my nephew. The poor lad died of a quinſey, after the laſt battle, in which the Ruſſians took the Turkiſh camp. His mother was inconſolable, for he was a youth of great promiſe.

I ſhall not mention philoſophy to you at preſent. I have ſent you packets, on metaphyſics, which you muſt have found at Paris. After all, it is a ſubject that reſembles a ditch; the more you dig the deeper it is. We may, without much danger, remain ignorant of many things. The moſt important is to live well, to enjoy tolerable health, and to be in poſſeſſion of friends

and

and a tranquil mind; all which advantages I wiſh you.

Praying God, &c.

LETTER LXX.

From the King.

December 18, 1770.

YOU will perhaps think it ſingular that I ſhould interfere in other people's affairs; and that, being a ſchool-boy of ſixty, I ſhould ſeat myſelf on the form of doctors in metaphyſics, and treat on ſubjects which the learned underſtand little more of than the moſt ignorant. But this is the very reaſon why I think myſelf authoriſed for thus ſpeaking. Did the queſtion relate to infiniteſimal calculation, or to the properties of curves, I ſhould ſit and liſten in ſilence, believe all you might tell me and admire. But here we are tranſported into the land of imagination, over which poets have more claims than philoſophers; for it is known they were the firſt theologians, and the original teachers of mankind. Our deſign not being to inebriate ourſelves with ancient fables, which ſtill are credited, but rather

to bear the torch of reaſon into the region of darkneſs, there to diſtinguiſh, if we can, ſome truths in the gloomy abyſs, and ſeparate real objects from the imaginary beings by which they are ſurrounded, we muſt ſet aſide all illuſions of the fancy, and endeavour to reaſon as conſiſtently as we can. Our ſubjects are God, Freedom, Religion, and Louis XIV.

I begin with God. According to the leaſt contradictory idea we can form of this being, I am convinced he cannot be material; becauſe he would then be penetrable, diviſible, and finite. If I ſuppoſe him a ſpirit, I employ a metaphyſical term which I do not underſtand, taking it according to the definition of philoſophers; I utter nonſenſe; for a being that occupies no ſpace, and has no real exiſtence, cannot poſſibly exiſt. I therefore give up matter and pure ſpirit; and, that I may conceive ſome idea of God, I imagine him to be the ſenſorium of the univerſe, as the intelligence annexed to the eternal organization of the worlds which exiſt. And in this I do not approach the ſyſtem of Spinoſa; nor that of the Stoics, who regarded all thinking beings as emanations from the grand univerſal ſpirit, which their faculty of thinking was to rejoin after death.

The proofs of this intelligence, or of this ſenſorium,

ſorium, are theſe—The aſtoniſhing agreement which exiſts in the whole phyſical arrangement of the world, vegetable and animal; and in the intelligence of man. For, if nature were unintelligent, ſhe could not give that which ſhe had not; ſuch being a groſs contradiction.

The ſubject of freedom is not leſs dark than that of the exiſtence of God. Yet the following are a few reflections, which merit conſideration.

Whence does it happen that men poſſeſs, and are pleaſed with, a ſenſation of their freedom? Could they poſſeſs this ſenſation, and this pleaſure, if freedom had no exiſtence?

But, ſince we muſt annex ſome preciſe idea to words, I define freedom to be that act of our will which enables us to chooſe, between different propoſitions, and which determines our choice. If therefore I exerciſe this act occaſionally, it is a ſign I poſſeſs the power. Man no doubt is determined by reaſon; to imagine otherwiſe would be madneſs. The ſuppoſition of his own preſervation, and welfare, is one of the powerful motives which make him incline to that ſide on which he imagines he ſhall find ſuch advantages. There are however worthy minds, that are able to prefer the good to the uſeful, that willingly ſacrifice wealth, or life, to patri-

otic views; and this choice is the greateſt of the acts of freedom.

You anſwer, all theſe reſolutions are the conſequence of our organization, and of the exterior objects which act upon our ſenſes. But, without organs, we ſhould have as much thought as a harpſichord would of ſound, if deprived of ſtrings. I grant that all our knowledge is the conſequence of ſenſation; but let us diſtinguiſh this knowledge from thoſe combinations which occaſion it to act, transform it, and turn it to admirable uſes.

Still you perſiſt, and allege our paſſions. You would be victorious, were the paſſions always ſo; but they are often conquered. I am acquainted with perſons who have corrected their defects. How great is the difference between a man well and a man ill educated; between a novice in the world and a perſon of experience! Now, were the doctrine of neceſſity true, no one could correct his defects, which would ever remain invariable. All exhortation would be vain, and experience would neither improve the imprudent nor the thoughtleſs. I therefore venture to ſuſpect this ſyſtem of neceſſity of contradiction; for, if it be rigorouſly admitted, laws, education, reward, and puniſhment would be uſeleſs, and ſuperfluous. If every thing be the

effect

effect of neceſſity, nothing can be ſubject to change; but experience ſhews me that education produces great effects; that men may be corrected and encouraged; and I am daily more and more convinced that reward and puniſhment are the bulwarks of ſociety. I therefore cannot admit an opinion contrary to the truths of experience; truths ſo palpable that even thoſe who embrace the ſyſtem of neceſſity continually contradict it, as well in their private lives as by their public actions. What then muſt become of a ſyſtem which can make us guilty of nothing but folly, if it be admitted literally true?

And now for religion, on which ſubject I dare flatter myſelf you will allow me to be impartial.

I think that a philoſopher who ſhould venture to teach the vulgar religion unmixed with fable would be in danger of lapidation. Should he find ſome new-formed ſoul, ſome American ſavage, not prejudiced in favour of any opinion, he might perſuade him to prefer a rational religion, to thoſe which fable has ſo much degraded. But, even could the religion of Socrates or of Cicero be propagated, in any province, its purity would ſoon become ſullied, by the introduction of ſuperſtition. Men will have objects which ſtrike the ſenſes, and amuſe the imagination. This we ſee among the proteſ-

tants; who, finding themſelves brought up in a worſhip too naked, too ſimple, often become catholics, from their love of feſtivals, ceremonies, and the fine anthems with which the holy catholic, apoſtolic, and Roman religion has bedizened, encumbered, and furbelowed, the ſimple morality of Chriſt. Witneſs the landgrave of Heſſe, baron Pöllnitz, and numerous others. But, were it granted you could retrieve men from ſo many errors, it is ſtill a queſtion whether they are worthy of being enlightened.

Louis XIV. ſhould properly be defended by the French themſelves, on whom he beſtowed fine manufactures and frontiers; which latter he ſo well fortified that he almoſt freed his kingdom from the fear of an attack. He was alſo the protector of letters, and ſhould be juſtified by the French, from motives of gratitude. But, ſince it is your will I ſhould be the Don Quixote, I take the liberty to obſerve to you that the Romans, long before Louis, maintained armies equally great; and that, had we here a hundred thouſand additional huſbandmen, we ſhould want three hundred thouſand acres more to afford them employment; for each field has a maſter and men ſufficient for its cultivation. What confidence can be placed in the faith of ſovereigns, in general, who moſt

of

of them are without faith? Who ſhall grind down thoſe puppets that act from I know not what fatality, and bring them pacific from the mill?

Let Europe only contain two reſtleſs monarchs and all will be alarm, and confuſion. Thus then I reaſon: wars have exiſted in all ages; and what has always been muſt from neceſſity be, although I am ignorant of the cauſe. Hence, this deſtructive ſcourge will ever deſolate our unfortunate globe.

You muſt alſo permit me not to think with you, concerning the revocation of the edict of Nantes. I am really very much obliged to Louis XIV; and, if his grandſon would follow his auguſt example, I ſhould be quite penetrated with gratitude: eſpecially were he, at the ſame time, to baniſh the philoſophic vermin from his kingdom; whom, as exiles, I ſhould charitably receive into Pruſſia. You would give me great pleaſure, could you perſuade your miniſters to ſtrike this great ſtroke. The academicians in a body would come to meet you, bear you on their ſhoulders, and the ſchiſmatic philoſopher would afford you the warmeſt welcome. But you know his ſentiments, of which you cannot doubt.

I pray, &c.

LETTER LXXI.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, January 3, 1771.

YOUR majeſty may ſay to me as Auguſtus does to Cinna, in the tragedy—

Je t'ai comblés de biens, je t'en veux accabler.

With the moſt reſpectful gratitude, I therefore obey your reiterated commands; and, ſince it is your pleaſure I ſhould employ the greateſt part of the ſum you had deſtined for my journey into Italy to other purpoſes, I ſhould imagine I failed in my duty, to my auguſt benefactor, were I longer to inſiſt, and not to accept the donation he has generouſly been pleaſed to beſtow.

Your majeſty has conferred another preſent, for which I am not leſs grateful. I mean your very pleaſant, very poetical, very witty, and very philoſophic production. I have repeatedly read it, and always with new pleaſure. I have exclaimed, ſtriking my forehead, "Curſed ma-"thematician, gloomy ponderer over x and y, "why haſt thou not rather the talent of verſifi-

* I have heaped, and now would overwhelm thee with, my favours.

"cation

" cation than that of cyphering! Thou wouldeſt " employ thy time much better, in turning this " jocular production into rhyme." However, I conſoled myſelf, by remembering, ſhould it be the author's pleaſure to put it in this form, it will ſuſtain no loſs. For who could better clothe it in verſe than he who has already ſo well expreſſed himſelf in proſe? I have no doubt but your majeſty has ſent this charming work to the grand and mortal enemy of bigotry, who has the honour of being ſo glorioufly celebrated by the philoſopher of kings, and the king of philoſophers. Oh Voltaire! How ſweet and conſolatory is the ſatisfaction thou enjoyeſt! Yet I envy not thy happineſs; for who is worthy to partake it with thee!

This ſame Voltaire informs me that your majeſty has ſent him ſome delightful verſes, coming from the emperor of China. Why cannot I reſiſt the wiſh to poſſeſs them, and add them to the jocular production I have received? Shall I be guilty of indiſcretion, in making this requeſt to your majeſty?

I perceived, when you did me the honour to ſend your dream, that it certainly is no ſleepy tale. You had not received the tireſome, prolix, philoſophic rhapſody, in which I made ſo feeble a reply to your excellent metaphyſical

letter, of the 1ſt of November. Although I may not reaſon ſo well as your majeſty on theſe thorny ſubjects, and on many others, I have at leaſt the ſatisfaction of perceiving that I think nearly as you do; and that I am better pleaſed to be ignorant, in your company, than in poſſeſſion of ſo much knowledge, in that of the author of the *Syſtême de la Nature*, on ſubjects concerning which nothing is known.

I am told, your majeſty at preſent is poſſeſſed of a teleſcope, by M. Beguelin; which muſt be excellent, if it reſemble his memoirs on this ſubject, which I have read with great pleaſure and profit, and the merit of which I am the more able to eſtimate, becauſe I have been accuſtomed to ſuch ſtudies, though not with equal ſucceſs. This academician, ſire, is highly worthy of your majeſty's favour and protection.

Be pleaſed, ſire, to accept, with your uſual goodneſs, the ardent prayers I offer up for the preſervation of your precious life, the proſperity of your undertakings, and that you may enjoy that glory and happineſs which your majeſty ſo much merits.

With theſe ſentiments, as well as with the tendereſt and moſt profound reſpect, which I ſhall to the laſt ſigh maintain,

I am, &c.

LETTER LXXII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, February 1, 1771.

A MONTH ago, I did myſelf the honour to thank your majeſty, for the jocular, though exceedingly philoſophic dream, you had the goodneſs to ſend me. At preſent, I have new thanks to return, not for your dream, but for your very profound letter; of which duty I ſhould much ſooner have acquitted myſelf, had it not been for the rheumatiſm, which for a fortnight has deprived me of the power of writing, and the effects of which I ſtill feel.

The more I reflect, the more, to my great ſatisfaction, I perceive that I only differ from your majeſty in my mode of expreſſion, relative to the exiſtence and nature of a Supreme Being; or of the Being called God. Your majeſty will not allow him to be purely material*;

* Were it not for the context it would be difficult to ſay what idea M. D'Alembert annexed to the words *purement materiel*; it is evident he diſbelieved the exiſtence of *ſpirit*, and that he ſuppoſed thought to be the reſult of organization. He is inaccurate by labouring to differ as little as poſſible, at leaſt in words, from the king; and, inſtead of *purely material*, he means *matter unorganized*. T.

and in this I agree. Neither can you form an idea of pure ſpirit; to which I likewiſe aſſent. You conſequently regard God as—*the Intelligence annexed to the eternal organization of exiſting worlds.* From this propoſition it ſeems to reſult, according to your majeſty, that God is nothing more than matter, *as far as matter is intelligent*; to which I can ſee nothing to oppoſe, ſince a part of matter is certainly intelligent, and men are free to give the name of God to matter, as far as matter is endowed with this attribute.

I am perfectly of your majeſty's opinion, in your definition of freedom. I, like your majeſty, define it to be—*that act of our will which enables us to chooſe between different propoſitions, and which determines our choice.* But I pretend, and it ſeems to me your majeſty does not diſown, there always are ſome motives or cauſes, which neceſſarily determine us. Nor do I perceive that the contrary is proved, by the remarks of your majeſty. Thoſe who reſiſt their paſſions, reſiſt from motives which are to them ſtronger than the paſſions themſelves; and exhortation, puniſhment, and reward, when men are determined by them, occaſion this determination; becauſe they are motives more powerful than any others by which they are oppoſed. Hence I cannot

cannot but conclude we always act from neceſſity, though voluntarily. It is moſt voluntarily that I do not poiſon myſelf; yet is it at the ſame time of neceſſity; becauſe the reaſons which at this moment attach me to life are ſtronger than thoſe which might detach from life.

With reſpect to the enquiry—*Whether the multitude ought to have a rational religion*—as unfortunately I cannot bring any example in proof, while your majeſty can adduce the whole ſurface of our little duſt-heap, I am much tempted to believe you are right. Did the treaty of Weſtphalia admit of a fourth religion in the empire, I ſhould entreat your majeſty to build a ſimple temple, at Berlin, or at Potſdam, in which God might be honoured in a manner worthy of himſelf; where humanity and juſtice ſhould be preached; and if the crowd did not reſort to this temple, after an experiment of ſome years, for, to gain the cauſe of reaſon, ſome years would be neceſſary, your majeſty would be entirely victorious: nor would it be the firſt time.

I ſhall only ſpeak a word on Louis XIV. I perfectly feel how much your majeſty is obliged to him, for his revocation of the edict of Nantes; but, as advocate for France, I hope your majeſty will allow that this fine kingdom ought to think

differently

differently on the ſubject. I know not whether philoſophers will there be treated as heretics have been; but I know that, ſhould ſuch a time come, the ſtates of your majeſty would be to them the moſt flattering and the moſt glorious aſylum, and that your bounty would afford them the beſt of conſolation.

I am, with the moſt profound reſpect, and admiration equal to my gratitude, &c.

P. S. Permit me, ſire, to add a work which your majeſty has had the goodneſs to approve, in manuſcript, and to which I have made ſome additions.

LETTER LXXIII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, March 6, 1771.

ABOUT a fortnight ſince, I received ſome charming verſes from your majeſty, addreſſed to your comrade in royalty and philoſophy, the emperor, or the king of China. My firſt duty is humbly to return thanks to your majeſty, for your goodneſs, in acceding to the deſire

deſire I had indicated to read theſe verſes, after the praiſes beſtowed on them by the patriarch of French poetry. But I am ſtill greater thanks in your majeſty's debt, for the pleaſure which this reading has afforded me; nor can I refuſe myſelf that of thus aſſuring your majeſty of its reality: though I perceive, by the charming and philoſophic letter which accompanies your poem, that you are ſuſpicious of praiſe, even when coming from a mathematician, who never praiſed where he did not eſteem. But the beſt manner of praiſing, that is to ſay, the moſt ſimple, is to praiſe by our actions; and I ſhall juſt obſerve to your majeſty that, even at the firſt reading of your excellent epiſtle, I remembered, in my own deſpite, a great number of the lines; and, if I do not miſtake, the merit of poetry is to be remembered. In my opinion, this is an infallible touchſtone of its worth. I therefore, ſire, take the liberty to ſay, mathematician as I am, that your verſes are excellent; ſince a brain loaded with x y and z has ſtill room for them: and, on this ſubject, I ſhall be—

Dur comme un geomètre en ſes opinions.*

I perceive your majeſty has always a laſh in ſtore for geometry. I ſhall anſwer you as the

* As poſitive in opinion as a mathematician.

regent

regent duke of Orleans did one of his miſtreſſes, who ſpoke againſt God—" You might as well " be ſilent, madam, for you ſhall be ſaved."— Your majeſty might as well be ſilent too, for you are more of a mathematician than you ſuſpect, or than many who pretend ſo to be. All juſt, preciſe, and clear minds appertain to geometry; in which quality we hope, ſire, you will do us the honour to be one of us; for this is an engagement you long ſince ſigned and ſealed to, by your writings.

In return for the excellent poetry your majeſty ſends me, I take the liberty to incloſe ſome poor proſe, which I have ſcribbled. I mean the diſcourſe and the dialogue I had the honour to read in the preſence of his majeſty the king of Sweden; the one at the academy of ſciences, and the other at the French academy. I had occaſion, in the diſcourſe, to render that homage to your majeſty which the ſciences, letters, and philoſophy long have owed you, for the protection with which you have honoured them, and the excellent works by which you have contributed to their progreſs. I muſt do the academicians the juſtice to ſay their applauſe, at this part of my diſcourſe, was unanimous. In fact, I did but feebly expreſs, though with all the force and truth of which I was capable, the profound

ſentiments

ſentiments of admiration, gratitude, and reſpect, with which all Frenchmen of letters are penetrated for your majeſty.

Your worthy nephew, the king of Sweden, ſeems deſirous to march in your ſteps: nor could he form himſelf on a finer model. He bears with him, from France, the univerſal eſteem and attachment of all thoſe who have had the honour to approach his preſence. His ſudden departure has deprived me of the happineſs of paying my court to him, except momentarily; but his kindneſs has penetrated me with gratitude. It is ſaid he is to have an interview with your majeſty, as he paſſes through Magdeburg; that he has things to relate, concerning what he has ſeen; and ſubjects of reflection for your majeſty, in part afflicting, in part pleaſant, but always philoſophic, and ſuch, in a word, as you are accuſtomed to make.

I am, with the moſt profound reſpect, and *mathematical* attachment, &c.

LET-

LETTER LXXIV.

From the King.

March 13, 1771.

I Occaſionally amuſe myſelf with ſubjects of pleaſantry, that I may enliven the ſterility of philoſophy; but, ſince you lead me back into the ſacred temple in which our ignorance ſhines moſt, I follow.

You begin by propoſing an alarming ſubject; no leſs than God himſelf, incomprehenſible to a being limited as I am, and of whom I can form no idea, except by comparing him to an organized body, that enjoys the power of thought. I contemplate the whole organization of the univerſe, and ſay to myſelf—"If thou who art but "a worm, being animated, canſt think, why "ſhould not thoſe immenſe bodies which are "in perpetual motion be productive of thought, "much ſuperior to thine?"

This appears to me very probable; but I have not the vanity to preſume, like the ancient ſtoics, that our ſoul is an emanation from that great Being, and which, after death, it ſhall rejoin. For God is not diviſible; and men are guilty of folly, which God is not. In fine, the eternal and divine nature cannot nor ought not

to communicate with periſhable beings, and creatures whoſe exiſtence has not the duration of a moment, compared with eternity! Such is my confeſſion of faith, and what I have been able to combine leaſt abſurd, on a ſubject which never has been underſtood, ſince the world was a world.

You hence conduct me into paths equally thorny; and I think I perceive ſome miſunderſtanding which, being rectified, will immediately make us agree. If you by *neceſſity* underſtand the ſame thing as I do by *adequate cauſe*, here ends our diſpute. However, I have ſtill ſome remarks to make. We muſt not imagine that all men are determined becauſe they have firſt well weighed the oppoſing reaſons; there are animals found, among theſe unfeathered bipeds, who decide from the firſt dictates of the imagination. I was acquainted with a duke of Mecklenburg who addicted himſelf to rhabdomancy. Theſe things prove that all people are not actuated by the ſame motives; and that reaſon is confined to the guidance of thoſe who are called the moſt ſage. If you perſiſt to call that neceſſity which I call reaſon, our conteſt is ended. But, if you ſuppoſe the reality of the doctrine of fate (or predeſtination) which makes us act like puppets, I ſhall find ſome trouble in becoming

becoming one of theſe puppets, in my old age.

You muſt be allowed to diſapprove the revocation of the edict of Nantes; though ſeveral of the perſons proſcribed, by Le Tellier, made great fortunes, in the countries they choſe for their aſylum. Not to mention that France is too populous. In the temples of theſe refugees, the religion you propoſe is in part found. Moral diſcourſes are only preached there, and opinions are left to ſlumber, concealed in the thouſands of volumes written on ſuch ſubjects, which are now no longer read.

I am perſuaded that a fanatic philoſopher is the greateſt of all poſſible monſters, and at the ſame time the moſt inconſiſtent animal earth ever produced. I ſatisfy myſelf therefore with ſuffering no conſtraint, concerning the little which my ſmall quantity of faith will permit me to believe; and, far from making converts, I leave each being free to build his ſyſtem, according to his good pleaſure. You have now my confeſſion entire. May you poſſeſs health and content.

On which I pray, &c.

P. S. The affair you recommended to me, relating to a canoneſs of Cleves, does not de-

ſend

pend on me; for there are laws and foundation-rules, which cannot be departed from.

LETTER LXXV.

From the King.

April 4, 1771.

YOU beſtow more praiſes on the anſwer of the emperor of China to Voltaire than it deſerves. Though a poet, this good emperor is in want of a ſecretary to labour for him, when he has any affairs to treat of with the people of the Eaſt; and, as I have the honour to ſerve him in this capacity, I have endeavoured to expreſs the ſentiments of this puiſſant monarch, in the Gallic tongue. He has become acquainted with ſome mathematical Jeſuits; and, as he found them all poſitive in their opinions, he thence too haſtily concluded that geometricians are unanimouſly pertinacious. But I hope to cure him of this prejudice; eſpecially if he will take the trouble to read the trial of Newton and Leibnitz, on the diſcovery of fluxions; and the writings of the great Bernouilli and his brother, who ſent each other challenges for the ſolution

of problems. It were to be wiſhed that no perſon ſhould be poſitive in opinion hereafter, mathematicians excepted. No man would ſuffer harm, whether the catenaria be or be not applicable to the balance of a watch; but, when opinions are in agitation which executioners maintain by death and unheard-of cruelties, inſtead of argument, it is no longer a joke; and you have ſtill ſome ſuch reaſoners in France, who would indulge in all the fire of fanaticiſm, if they could with impunity. I have heard ſome very melancholy accounts of this kind, but which powerful reaſons forbid me to publiſh.

I have read your diſcourſe, and the dialogue of Deſcartes. I thank you for having mentioned my name in a company of philoſophers, among whom my ignorance ought to place me beyond the ambition of praiſe. The dialogue of Deſcartes is a finiſhed work, and the more admirable becauſe the ſubject was oppoſite to the perſon to whom it was applied, and the praiſe was ingenious, well imagined and true.

I am not acquainted with the king of Sweden, but I ſhall be glad to ſee him, for I have heard him applauded by perſons well read in mankind. He need but imitate himſelf, and continue as he has begun. But what a country is Sweden, for the arts! One of its moſt learned men

men affirms that the loſt paradiſe is diſcovered in Scania*, and a botaniſt, one Linnæus, affirms horſes and men are of the ſame ſpecies †. I know not the name of another madman, who conjures up ghoſts ‡ and converſes with the ſpirits of the dead. On examining ſuch a race, we ſhould ſay that never could philoſopher like Deſcartes have ſet foot in Sweden. Either he underſtood mental agriculture ill, or the ſeeds which he ſowed have ſtrangely degenerated.

Thoſe who mean to honour queen Chriſtina, for her abdication, begin by affirming that, indignant at the want of knowledge and the ſavage manners of the Swedes of her time, ſhe preferred a private life, among a civilized and ingenious people, to the pleaſure of reigning, where ſhe could not eſteem. As for the preſent king, if I lay my money it ſhall be that he will not abdicate for any ſuch reaſons. He will no doubt attempt to enlighten the north, and to promote the love of the arts and ſciences, that they may aſcend the throne uſurped by ancient

* Le Paradis *perdu* s'eſt *trouvé* en Scanie. The king here indulges a play upon words. T.

† His majeſty had been told ſomething, and he did not exactly recollect what. D'Alembert could not but ſmile at *one Linnæus*. T.

‡ Swedenborg. T.

prejudices and Gothic pedantry, from which the univerſities of this country are not yet freed.

A political teſtament, under the name of Voltaire, is circulated here by ſome wag, who muſt have collected his opinions, and has certainly forged it according to his own fancy. I ſhall be much ſurpriſed ſhould no anonymous author think proper to write in the name of poor D'Argens, and regale us with a work which he will have compoſed in the Elyſian fields. I truly regret him; he was an honeſt man and a real philoſopher, poſſeſſed of much knowledge, of which he knew how to make uſe. His ſtyle was ſometimes troubled with a diarrhœa, and it was his indolence that prevented him from correcting the works he publiſhed. Scarcely had he finiſhed a ſheet before, without reading it, he ſent it to the bookſeller. If any one would take the trouble to ſelect, excellent things might be collected from his works. But a man may be both loquacious and virtuous; and the laſt quality is ſuperior to every other. It is a fine varniſh which conceals many ſpots that are but too abundant in the picture of humanity.

I hope you have leſs ſevere weather at Paris than we have here, and that you enjoy perfect health of body, and unſhaken peace of mind.

On which I pray, &c.

LET-

LETTER LXXVI.

From M. D'Alembert.

Paris, April 21, 1771.

I RECEIVED almoſt at the ſame time the two letters with which your majeſty has been pleaſed to honour me. My firſt care was to conform, if poſſible, to the wiſh which your majeſty teſtified, in the ſecond of theſe letters, that I ſhould procure ſome one of the fables of the duke de Nivernois. As he was not then at Paris, I wrote to him immediately, and take the liberty to ſend your majeſty the anſwer he returned me. I greatly regret my want of ſucceſs; but I can in part inform your majeſty of the manner of theſe fables, which are rather in the ſtyle of thoſe of De la Motte than of any other fabuliſt; but better written, and with more taſte.

I am highly flattered by the approbation your majeſty has the goodneſs to beſtow on the two ſhort works I did myſelf the honour to ſend. You ſeem to prefer the dialogue to the diſcourſe, and I ſhall take care not to appeal from your judgment. I ſhall, however, be free enough to own the diſcourſe is more dear to me than the

dialogue; the reaſon of which I would wiſh your majeſty to divine.

It ſeems to me that the ſubject of our little controverſy, or metaphyſical diſcuſſion, is exhauſted; and farther to weary your majeſty would but be faſtidious. All things well conſidered, I perceive I differ but little from you; and this little difference is neceſſary, for the honour of metaphyſical obſcurity. The points moſt eſſential, as your majeſty well remarks, are to feel and confeſs that our feeble underſtandings cannot penetrate into ſuch ſubjects; and eſpecially that we ſhould not wiſh to maintain, by executioners and faggots, what ſcarcely can be ſupported by frail arguments. Philoſophy might probably ſuffer this wretched fate in France, if as we are threatened the Jeſuits ſhould be recalled. The parliament, by which they were expelled, has been baniſhed in turn. It was but little more tolerant or more favourable to philoſophy than the ſons of Loyola were; but, if this jeſuitical cohort ſhould re-enter France, and the madneſs of revenge and the atrocity of fanaticiſm ſhould combine, God knows what would become of philoſophy!

I join your majeſty in regret for the death of the poor marquis. His literary merit cannot be eſtimated with greater juſtice than it has been

been by your majeſty, in what you have ſaid concerning his works, and his ſtyle: but the tender and reſpectful attachment which I have continually ſeen him entertain, for your majeſty, will always render his memory dear to me. He is freed from the ills of life; and, as Fontenelle ſaid, from the difficulty of exiſtence. I imagine I ſhall ſoon follow, for I feel myſelf ſenſibly weakened; and, without abſolutely riding poſt to the next world, I continue my journey by ſhort ſtages. M. de Mairan, like me a member both of the French academy and of the academy of ſciences, is lately dead, at the age of ninety-three. I ſhould be ſorry to live ſo long, for I have no reaſon to hope old age would to me be equally mild, and healthy.

Voltaire drags on life, and writes ſtill. That his mind ſhould be capable of ſo much labour is very aſtoniſhing; but that your majeſty ſhould ſo long be equal to ſo many glorious and uſeful works is a recollection by which I am infinitely more intereſted. Letters in particular have more than ever need of you, and of that protection you afford. May this long be continued.

Such are the prayers I ſhall inceſſantly make, till the laſt breath of life: they do but expreſs the ſentiments of gratitude, admiration, and profound reſpect, with which, &c.

LETTER LXXVII.

From the King.

May 7, 1771.

IT is pity that the duke de Nivernois ſhould deprive the public of his productions. The ſciences never are ſo much encouraged as when, without bluſhing, they are cultivated by the great. The duke de Nivernois is at preſent the only perſon, among the firſt nobility, who unites knowledge and talents, at a time when the arts ſeem to have loſt much of their reſpect in France. He might raiſe and redeem them from the vulgar. I am ſorry his extreme circumſpection ſhould prevent him from thus encouraging the public. But each man ſhould be free to act as he thinks proper; though it is uſually affirmed that the virtues of Cenobites are of no benefit to ſociety; and the ſame may be ſaid of good works, which never ſee the light.

When I expoſe my ſentiments, on our philoſophical and metaphyſical diſſertations, to the Anaxagoras of the age, it is rather that I ſhould gain information than that he ſhould be refuted. The queſtion I have ventured to examine is in itſelf ſo abſtract that it eſcapes human reſearch; and

and miſtakes of ſuch a kind are of no ill conſequence. Let us conſole ourſelves, my dear D'Alembert, by recollecting we are not alone condemned to remain ignorant of the Divine Nature. Were that ignorance the greateſt of our misfortunes, we might to this be eaſily reconciled. I often recollect that the Engliſh poet ſays—

"For action form'd will man pretend to think?" *

I cannot deſcribe how much I am amuſed by your countrymen. A nation ſo addicted to novelty is inceſſantly preſenting me with new ſcenes. To-day the Jeſuits are expelled; tomorrow confeſſional billets are in vogue; the next day the parliament is baniſhed, and the Jeſuits are recalled: not to mention that every three months the miniſtry is changed. France furniſhes ſubject for converſation to all Europe. If Providence thought of me, while creating the world (ſuppoſing it to have done this act) Providence certainly formed theſe people for my recreation.

However I do not think the Jeſuits will be recalled. The king imagines they are participators in the crime of Damiens, which is no rea-

* Not recollecting the line to which he alludes, I have tranſlated the words of the king. T.

ſon

ſon why the kingdom ſhould again be infected by ſuch vermin. We muſt not look with too jaundiced an eye. Should the worſt happen, does not Pruſſia offer you a ready aſylum? Did not Deſcartes take refuge in Holland, and afterward in Sweden, to conceal himſelf from the perſecutions of his countrymen? Would not Galileo have acted prudently to have fled from Italy, and to have eſcaped from the priſons in which he was detained by the Inquiſition? The country of the philoſopher is that in which he can be ſafe, and philoſophiſe in repoſe. His native kingdom becomes inimical to him, as ſoon as he there ſuffers perſecution.

I have ſeen the king of Sweden, as he paſſed through Pruſſia. He loves France, but quits it to aſcend the throne. He is very amiable and well informed, but he will find ſufficient to exerciſe his patience at home. Sweden is a terrible country to govern.

Alexis Orloff, the Lacedæmonian, who has made war in the Peloponneſus and the Mediterranean, has been here and left me a curious morſel, which he met with at Venice: may it contribute to your edification, and to that of the flock!

Rid yourſelf of the ſpleen, my dear D'Alembert. It is better for us to laugh than to weep

at

at the follies of mankind. Cheriſh cheerful ideas, and diſſipate your gloom. If you wiſh to be merry, come hither. Such is my deſire, and to this I exhort you. Here you will live in tranquillity and content.

LETTER LXXVIII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, June 14, 1771.

THOSE philoſophers who love to laugh, and laughing will not render them leſs philoſophers, are much indebted to the abbé Nicolini, for having procured them the edificatory brief of God's earthly vicar, to the pontiff of his ambaſſador, Mahomet. Not that I am aſtoniſhed at their preſent good intelligence: for, in my opinion, the Imans and the Muftis, of all ſects, are better formed for mutual ſupport than they are imagined to be. Their common end is to ſubjugate the poor human race, by ſuperſtition; and their chief difference is in the kind of bridle, with which they curb the animal. They may ſay to each other, like the phyſicians of Moliere —"Let me vomit the patient, and you ſhall "bleed

" bleed him." But I ſuſpect the moſt reverend father in God, Ganganelli, keeps a ſecretary to draw out his briefs, who is more cunning than himſelf, and who mocks at what the cordelier Pope dictates. It is even aſſerted that this ſecretary is ready to play the Chriſtian church a trick, by reconciling the heretical and the uncircumciſed, who cut each others throats without knowing why. True it is, this ill trick to the Chriſtian church would be a very good turn done to humanity; by whom the ſecretary will be bleſſed, and thanked, for not ſatisfying himſelf with making philoſophers laugh, but who endeavours to dry up the tears of miſerable multitudes.

Your majeſty does that pleaſant nation the French the honour to laugh at its expence, and to imagine it created for your recreation. Though a good Frenchman, I allow you have cauſe for your mirth. I know not whether good or ill will be the reſult of what is paſſing here, but I ſhould be very much at eaſe ſhould your majeſty's prophecy be accompliſhed, relative to thoſe vermin, the Jeſuits; and if letters, philoſophy, and the ſtate ſhould not have the misfortune to behold them here once more. I am not leſs intereſted on another ſubject. All that

ſhould happen would be tolerably indifferent to me—

Si de quelque argent frais nous avions le ſecours;*

As Criſpin ſays in the comedy. But I fear it will be more difficult to recal the money into our purſes than the Jeſuits into the kingdom. For my own part, I have for theſe ſix months ſubſiſted on your majeſty's benefactions; and, inſtead of ſaying the *Benedicite* every day, my grace before meat is—May God preſerve Frederic!

It muſt be owned, when we perceive the admirable manner in which this beſt of poſſible worlds is governed, we are exceedingly tempted to believe in Providence! Could I however recover my ſtomach, or procure ſleep, half my evils would vaniſh; but my nights and days are deſtined to paſs in almoſt equal gloom. Patience and reſignation, to the will of Nature, are neceſſary. But, whether thinking, vegetating, dining, faſting, ſleeping, or waking, there is one ſentiment which never ſlumbers in my heart; the ſentiment of eternal gratitude toward your majeſty, of the admiration which I feel inceſſantly renewed, and of the profound reſpect with which, during life, I ſhall, &c.

* Had we but ſome ready money.

LET-

LETTER LXXIX.

From the King.

July 25, 1771.

I AM glad that the philoſophers of Paris neither reſemble * * *, who never laughs, nor the Roſinante of Don Quixote, that never galloped but once during life. The Pope, the Mufti, the Derviſes, and the Monks are, in the preſent age, ſubjects for men's diverſion; time has been when their preſence excited men's groans. I know not whether the correſpondence between God's vicegerent, at Rome, and the ſucceſſor of Mahomet, at Conſtantinople, be well authenticated; but, if they did not write what is attributed to them, they ought ſo to have written. Their trade being the ſame, the ſale of their drugs and rivalſhip only could render them enemies. The combatants of the creſcent, and the warriors of the Hyperborean ſeas, are more difficult to be reconciled than prieſts; it is however to be hoped that ſome kind-hearted perſons will re-eſtabliſh peace between them.

Thus, you ſee, war is one of the ingredients which neceſſarily enters into the compoſition of this

this wretched earth. From the year 1734, Europe has beheld one perpetual ſucceſſion of wars: that of 1740, which continued to 1748; that of 1756, to 1763; and that between the Ruſſians and Turks, which began in 1769, and which ſtill rages. Spain has been on the point of breaking with England. In fine, ten years ſeldom paſs away during which Europe is ſuffered to enjoy continual peace.

The French, who find conſolation in a ſong, exclaim a little, when war obliges them to raiſe new taxes; but theſe, after a few witticiſms, are forgotten. Thus, by a happy effect of levity, the inclination they have to be merry is ſtronger than all the reaſons they find for affliction. A kingdom ſo rich as France is, with reſources ſo immenſe that the depredations of multitudes of financiering banditti have not been able to exhauſt its wealth, cannot want money; and the oldeſt king in chriſtendom muſt poſſeſs more conſiderable treaſures than ever were collected by Montezuma, or the Mogul emperors. I will therefore venture to ſuppoſe that the philoſophers of Paris laugh at the inhabitants of the ſhores of the Baltic, when they mention the want of ſpecie. We Pruſſians, Danes, and Swedes, are the beggars of Europe; ſavages, little better than barbarians, who

are

are half blind, and who awkwardly imitate the arts of poliſhed nations. It was well ſaid, by father Bouhours, that good ſenſe might, poſſibly, but that wit could not, exiſt any where, except in France. You are in the country of El Dorado, where the rocks are gold, and the flints diamonds; yet, opulent as you are, you complain of not being in the celeſtial Jeruſalem, which is ſtill ſuperior to the country of El Dorado.

Read the age of Louis XIV. and there behold how the arts have been honoured in France, and the deciſive protection which was granted them, by this ſovereign. Satirized as that age has been, you cannot but obſerve what care is at preſent taken that the preſent age ſhould not, in turn, be ſatirized, by poſterity. I humbly therefore requeſt the great philoſopher to condeſcend to teach me an entire new method to gain the approbation of all people, in all ages. He will greatly oblige me, by enlightening my Gothic ignorance, on a ſubject ſo intereſting; and I aſſure him he ſhall enjoy the whole honour of the diſcovery.

I have read the fourth volume of the Encyclopedic queſtions, by Voltaire, among which I am very much ſurpriſed to find a fierce attack upon Maupertuis. There is ſomething ſo cowardly

ardly in calumniating the dead, ſo unworthy in blackening the memory of men of merit, and ſomething in this proceeding which denotes vengeance ſo implacable, ſo atrocious, that I almoſt repent of the ſtatue that has been erected. How is it poſſible that ſo much genius can be allied to ſo much perverſity! I own it gives me great pain. You, who have a good heart, ought to remonſtrate to Voltaire, concerning his conduct, which is more injurious to himſelf than to Maupertuis. I cannot but confeſs I am weary of continually finding the names of Maupertuis, Desfontaines, Freron, Le Franc de Pompignan, the poet Rouſſeau, and Abraham Chaumeix, in his works. Abuſe ſo often repeated diſguſts the reader, and too much unmaſks the heart of Voltaire. This is mournful, not pleaſant.

The poor Vandals of theſe diſtricts ſalute the philoſopher of modern Athens, the Anaxagoras of Paris, and recommend themſelves to his protection, and his prayers. They entreat they may participate in his pious works, as, Vandals though they are, they participate in the prayers of the good Jeſuits. By theſe means there can be no fear of Paradiſe. A geometrician on one ſide, and a Jeſuit on the other, if we do not travel faſt then, when ſhall we? Preſerve your cheerfulneſs, laugh with Democritus,

enjoy life, keep yourſelf in good health, and be certain that no perſon is more intereſted in your welfare than the ſolitary Vandal of Sans Souci.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER LXXX.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, Auguſt 17, 1771.

THE letter your majeſty did me the honour to write, in anſwer to my lamentations on the preſent ſtate of the French finances, recals to my mind the fable of the ant, that was well provided with all kinds of ſtores, and mocked the poor graſshopper for not being equally careful. A kingdom like France, ſay you, never can want money. Perhaps ſo: but, if the god Plutus have not entirely taken his leave of us, he has at leaſt ſo carefully concealed himſelf that his retreat will with difficulty be diſcovered. The abbé Terrai, our comptroller general, is exerting himſelf in the ſearch, but to no effect. I know not how far father Bouhours might be right when he pretended wit could only be found in France: but I recollect that formerly a famous

a famous dancing maſter, named Marcel, pretended men could dance no where but in France. We may at preſent be told, in the words of the ant to the graſshopper,—" Well, now go " dance."—And, as to the epigram of father Bouhours, be it true or falſe, I wiſh with Criſpin that we had the philoſophy to turn our wit into ready money. Your majeſty perhaps will remember Moliere's miſer, while I thus repeat the word money; but this does not increaſe my affliction; nay, I even perceive a peculiar advantage, in the misfortune with which I am threatened, for I ſhall no longer have any thing to fear from indigeſtion. Oh! Providence! Providence! All muſt own that " whatever is " is right;" and, as St. Paul has told us, " all " things ſhall work together for our good." King Alphonſus ſaid, of that confuſion of circles which ancient aſtronomers had imagined, that, had he been of the council of God, when he created the world, he could have given him ſome good advice: and I am occaſionally tempted to believe, when my devotion is ſomewhat lukewarm, that God had as much want of advice, at leaſt, in his creation of the moral as of the phyſical, world. I ſoon however reject the thought, when I recollect all the perfections of the moral world, the happineſs which overflows the ſurface of

the earth, and the ſpirit of juſtice, of diſintereſtedneſs, and of truth, which reigns over the human ſpecies. It cannot be denied, ſire, this earth is a moſt delicious abode, for a philoſopher; who certainly muſt be vexed at being expelled, whether by hunger, indigeſtion, or the true believers, Ruſſians or Mahometans, who are ſo worthily employed in mutual maſſacre.

Your majeſty hopes "ſome kind-hearted perſons will be found, who will re-eſtabliſh peace between them." My firſt wiſh is for the accompliſhment of this hope; but it remains to be aſked, all things well conſidered, whether you are conferring any benefit on this unfortunate human race, when you prevent men from reciprocal deſtruction. This is an important point, worthy your majeſty's conſideration, and I am previouſly convinced you will act for the beſt; in order to do which the firſt thing neceſſary is to preſerve yourſelf, for this is the greateſt good that can accrue to humanity, or to philoſophy.

It is your majeſty's wiſh that I ſhould write to Voltaire, as a philoſopher, to induce him not to revile the dead, nor the living who are ſuppoſed dead, and who ought by him ſo to be ſuppoſed, when the little injury they are able to

do

do him is remembered. Alas! It is long ſince I took the liberty to give him this advice; and your majeſty ſees what has been the conſequence. Who cannot but groan at the fate of mankind, when a ſingle man is not permitted at once to poſſeſs perfect genius and perfect virtue! Though ſuch permiſſion might certainly be granted, were it only as ſome recompenſe to earth, overburthened as it is with ſo many men who have neither genius nor virtue. However, I ſhall make a new effort, according to the remonſtrances of your majeſty. I will repreſent to him that, as you ſay, a writer who is an honour to France is too great to maintain a petty war of buſh-fighting with Pandours; that he is too juſt not to render to merit what to merit is due; that the greateſt of men have need of indulgence, and render themſelves worthy of indulgence by ſhewing it to others; that not only his private peace but his writings would profit by ſuch conduct; and that expreſſions of hatred, which occur at each page, render them leſs intereſting; ſince it may be nearly ſaid of authors, as of comedians,

Que de leurs demêlés le public n'a que faire.*

Were I to add example to advice, and point

* The world has nothing to do with their diſputes.

out the great men who have oppoſed ſatire by moderation and fame, I well know, ſire, what model I ſhould propoſe for his imitation. But he perhaps would anſwer—this model is more eaſily admired than imitated: in which caſe I know not very well what I ſhould reply.

I am, with the moſt profound reſpect, and gratitude which will only end with life, &c.

LETTER LXXXI.

From the King.

September 6, 1771.

SINCE you are ſo determined, I will believe that the fine kingdom of France is deſtitute of money. This ſuppoſed, I congratulate it on the proſperity which awaits it, in this world and the next. The ſage legiſlator of Lacedæmon, Lycurgus, rendered his republic famous, by interdicting the admiſſion of all metals, iron excepted. The French, according to this example, will become the moſt diſintereſted nation in Europe, the moſt attached to their country, the moſt virtuous and the moſt invincible. And what a ſtill more happy proſpect of futurity

is

is preſented! Paradiſe and eternal life, we well know, may not be enjoyed by the rich. Behold, my dear D'Alembert, what views of future bliſs open on your countrymen! Some vile financiers, treaſurers, archbiſhops, and people of their complexion excepted; who, too much the ſlaves of habit, and addicted to ancient uſage, continue to collect, accumulate, and conceal their riches. I nevertheleſs cannot diſſemble that, in my opinion, one ſingle word will be ſufficient to call back, into the kingdom, the ſame abundance of money which formerly was there found; and that ſingle word is *credit*. Let this be reeſtabliſhed, and it will conjure up the treaſures that have been buried, fearing leſt they ſhould be loſt. Gold and ſilver would come into circulation, and philoſophers would be paid, as miſtreſſes I imagine are. This is at preſent a word of incantation more potent than certain expreſſions, which crazy people repeat, on certain occaſions, before their ridiculous idols. Forgive me this ſcandalous compariſon. It has eſcaped me *currente calamo*; and, being written, it ſhall not be effaced.

But do not imagine that you French are the only people who ſuffer, at preſent. In Germany, we experience worſe evils than thoſe occaſioned among you, by the ſtagnation of money. We

have had two ſucceſſive bad harveſts. Proviſion had been made for the firſt year, but we are now taken unprovided; our granaries are exhauſted, and our whole induſtry will ſcarcely perhaps ſuffice to feed the people, till the next year's harveſt. Such is the deſtiny of mankind, in this beſt of poſſible worlds. My phyſical are added to your moral complaints; yet will they neither be more nor leſs.

I own, I greatly deſire peace ſhould be reeſtabliſhed, between people of the eaſt and my barbarous neighbours, the Sarmatians; but I very much fear I ſhall not ſucceed. The Janſeniſts and Moliniſts might ſooner be brought to agree, than a certain number of crowned heads could be put under one hat. But this might be overlooked, were not the fire progreſſive, and did it not, in its approach, emit ſome ſparks on neighbouring buildings.

So much for the quarrels of deſpots. As to thoſe of authors, you will perform a meritorious work in admoniſhing Voltaire, relative to the repeated and common-place abuſe, which he heaps on Maupertuis, by whom it was not merited; and on other literary dwarfs, who by this means are drawn from that oblivion in which they probably would have crawled, to all eternity. From the conduct of Voltaire, I conclude that,

that, were he a king, he would continually be at daggers drawn with his neighbours; his reign would be one perpetual war; and God knows then what arguments he would employ, to prove that war is the natural ſtate of ſociety, and that peace was not intended for man. The paſſions, ingenious to diſguiſe themſelves, often employ reaſon to plead their cauſe. We are unwilling to acknowledge ourſelves in an error; and argument is called in, and tortured, that it may apparently authoriſe our conduct. Convinced of the miſchiefs theſe paſſions occaſion, ſhould any atrabilarious doctor heat his imagination, and endeavour to extinguiſh them, he would but endeavour to hurry us into another extreme. The animated man would become a ſtupid automaton, a motionleſs being. For this reaſon, we muſt leave things as they are; procure bread, when it is ſcarce; unearth money, when it is neceſſary; cry in the market-place—*credit, credit*; permit thoſe to make war who are determined not to be at peace; ſuffer ſelf-called philoſophers to print abuſe; and ſatisfy ourſelves with preſerving our own houſe in tranquillity.

On which I pray, &c.

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LETTER LXXXII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, November 8, 1771.

BY the laſt letter your majeſty has done me the honour to write, I perceive mankind are not much more happy in the north than in the ſouth of our poor Europe. In your preceding letter, your provident philoſophy indulged a little ridicule on the embarraſſment which our follies have occaſioned; and I took the liberty to compare what you ſaid to the ant, that mocked the graſshopper. But at preſent, thanks to Divine Providence, by which all things are ſo well conducted, from the Pyrenees to the Frozen Sea all are graſshoppers. Did I not entertain that profound reſpect for this Holy Providence which it merits, I own I ſhould be rather out of humour with its proceedings; and I am almoſt certain your majeſty would be the ſame; for, if we might have foreſeen and impeded a part of our actual diſaſter, in France, it cannot be ſo affirmed of your majeſty. And here I recollect what that ſaid famous dancing-maſter, named Marcel, ſaid to a lady, one of his ſcholars, who turned in her toes—"Madam,"

ſaid

ſaid he, pointing to a crucifix which ſtood in her chamber, "your legs are as ill put on as thoſe "of this figure; though I muſt own that, as to "the latter, it is not his fault."

But here, ſire, let us leave both graſshoppers and crucifixes. Your majeſty ſuppoſes that, if we would get out of the dirt, we muſt cry in the market-place—*Credit re-eſtabliſhed.* But it ſeems to me we ought firſt to cry *œconomy*; without which, the firſt exclamation might be anſwered as merchants anſwer thoſe who aſk for money—*Credit is extinct.* But I believe it would be more difficult efficaciouſly to cry œconomy, to our depredators, than moderation, to Voltaire. I ſeldom write to him without exhorting him to deſpiſe the grubs he cruſhes, and to ſpare the men of merit whom he vilifies. Yet your majeſty perceives how much he profits by my remonſtrances. We muſt determine to leave men and things as they are, and not ſay like Pope—"Whatever is is right"—but, "What-"ever is cannot be otherwiſe." Literature however has more need than ever to reſpect itſelf, ſince in my opinion its ſtate is leſs than ever favourable. Nay I think that, almoſt over all Europe, there is a great propenſity to oppreſs letters. I am told that it is here intended to ſuppreſs the royal college, founded by Francis I,

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the father of literature. The motive cannot be expence, for I doubt whether it coſts twenty thouſand livres (eight hundred pounds) per annum, for the ſupport of the profeſſors. Perhaps it is intended to ſtarve in order to ſilence philoſophy; in which caſe the expedient is well imagined. Philoſophy muſt be allowed to have done kings great ſervices, if it were only in deſtroying that ſuperſtition which rendered them the ſlaves of prieſts. But the field is tilled, the oxen that drive the plough no more are wanted, and there is no more care taken to give them fodder. I have ſet my ſhoulder to the yoke, to the beſt of my abilities, and with what ſtrength I had. Your majeſty has been pleaſed to regard my exertions with kindneſs, and to you am I indebted for the firſt recompenſe I received for my labours. Still more, I am indebted to you for my preſent ſubſiſtence; thanks to the benefactions you were pleaſed to honour me with laſt year. This my œconomy ſhall manage as long as poſſible, and I will, without heſitating, have recourſe to the ſame benefactor, when my funds are exhauſted.

I have at preſent another favour to requeſt, from your majeſty; which is that you would pleaſe to cauſe reſearches to be made, in the library of Magdeburg, if that library which exiſted

iſted in the laſt age have not been tranſported elſewhere, for a work of Pliny the naturaliſt, which it is pretended is there to be found. I greatly doubt the truth of this anecdote. I ſhould weary your majeſty, were I to relate the reaſons on which I found my ſuſpicions; but the object however is of ſufficient importance to induce an effectual enquiry to be made, into its truth. The queſtion relates to *a hiſtory, in twenty books, of the wars of the Romans, againſt the various nations of Germany*. Literature, which already has ſo many obligations to your majeſty, will have another, ſhould you be pleaſed to give your commands that the fact may be verified, and that we may at laſt be certain there is no ſuch precious manuſcript in exiſtence; as there is but too much reaſon to believe.

While entreating your majeſty to be pleaſed to enquire into this anecdote, I ſhall take the liberty to relate another. In the month of January, at a village named Vitry, near Paris, a woman who had lived in obſcurity, and even poverty, died. This woman, it is aſſerted, was the widow of the czarowitz, Alexis, who was put to death by his father, the czar Peter I. If this be truth, the woman muſt have been the ſiſter-in-law to the late emperor, Charles VI, whoſe wife was of the houſe of Wolfenbuttle, as was the wife

of the czarowitz. The latter, it was rumoured at the time, died of a kick, which her huſband gave her in the belly, when ſhe was in a ſtate of pregnancy. But it is now pretended a billet was buried in her ſtead; that ſhe fled from Ruſſia; that ſhe went to Louiſiana, and from thence to the iſle of France; and that ſhe there married an officer, named Maldack, whoſe name ſhe bore till her death. Various combining circumſtances, which united form tolerably ſtrong proofs, appear to demonſtrate that this woman was really the widow of prince Alexis. It ſeems certain that ſhe received a penſion from the court of Brunſwick; and by this means perhaps your majeſty may gain farther information.

I am, with the moſt profound reſpect, &c.

LETTER LXXXIII.

From the King.

November 30, 1771.

I BELIEVE the gods have reſerved for themſelves that happineſs the appearance of which they have beſtowed on man, and of which we are continually yet ineffectually in ſearch.

But, although we are deprived of perfect felicity, we in return poſſeſs many conſolations which remove a number of our evils. The firſt is hope; and the ſecond a fund of native cheerfulneſs; which you French folks eſpecially poſſeſs, in a ſupreme degree. A ſong, or an excellent repartee, will diſſipate your cares. If there be a dearth, Providence has its couplet. If taxes increaſe, woe to the tax-gatherers whoſe names may be brought in rhyme. Thus you always find conſolation. You act rationally, and I declare myſelf of your party. It is ridiculous to afflict ourſelves for temporary events, the eſſence of which is inſtability. While Heraclitus weeps at them, Democritus laughs. Let us laugh, likewiſe, my dear D'Alembert; you at your finances, and I at the preſent dearth, at my gout, &c. &c. This is the way in which I am determined to act, and have reaſon to be ſatisfied. Scarcely was I freed from exceſs of pain before I diverted myſelf on the ſubject of the Confederates of Poland. I find amuſement in painting them as they are. I here ſend you ſome cantos of a poem which I will not ſay is good. It was a remedy which, by diverting my thoughts, ſuſpended pain. May it cure you of your vapours; may you for a few moments forget your embarraſſments, and remember,

ber, while reading, that you read the verſes of a man in the gout, and who has paſſed the ſixtieth year of his age.

You tell me of the little honour in which literature is at preſent held in France. I cannot think the complaint is general throughout Europe; but you will grant me that many men of letters, by their conduct, authoriſe the want of eſteem in which they live. The majority of mankind, who do not reflect, confound the character and the genius of the artiſt; and, while they deſpiſe his morals, they alſo contemn his art. It is ſuppoſed, ſince knowledge neither corrects the character of the learned nor renders them more meek, that a great number of them turn their knowledge to abuſe; that to be learned is uſeleſs; that an enlightened mind is only conducive to oſtentation; and that, ſince no advantage is derived from ſcience, it is uſeleſs to ſociety. This reaſoning is mathematically falſe; for, were we to condemn all good inſtitutions becauſe of the abuſes which mankind commit, not one would remain. What would you have men think, when they ſee works, by the ſame author, that are contradictory to each other; when they diſcriminate between that which his pen has freely written, and that which he has ſcribbled from venal motives; when infamous

famous libels appear againſt government; when ſhameleſs cynics carp and bite, indifferently, at all they meet; and when, in philoſophic works, the abominable maxims again are found of John Petit*, Buſembaum, and Malagrida? Is it for lovers of wiſdom to encourage crimes? Remembering the guilt of Damiens, ought not ſuch men to be circumſpect, leſt they ſhould inflame ſome overheated imagination, by infernal maxims, which may induce them to commit the moſt atrocious acts? Had Virgil, Cicero, Varro, and Horace been guilty of ſuch acts, they never would have enjoyed that fame in Rome which ſtill is paid to their memory. To render literature reſpectable, not only genius but morality is eſpecially neceſſary. But the trade is become too common; it is practiſed by too many tyros, who bring it into diſcredit.

* John Petit by no means merits to be ranked with theſe two deteſtable Jeſuits. Be his motives for defending the duke of Burgundy (who under Charles VI. of France had cauſed Louis the dauphin to be murdered) what they may, nothing can be more wholeſome than the doctrine for which he has been ſo much decried. He aſſerted that all means were good to rid the world of a tyrant, and that the man who ſhould murder him would not only deſerve to eſcape puniſhment but would merit reward. If ſociety itſelf have not virtue enough to rid itſelf of a tyrant, nothing can be more heroic than ſuch an act; taking care that his tyranny be real, and not imaginary. T.

With reſpect to yourſelf, I am glad to perceive the confidence you place in me: nor ſhall you be deceived; though the ruinous ſtate of the finances of a monarch whoſe revenues amount to four hundred millions (ſixteen millions and a half ſterling) appears to me very ſtrange.

You wiſh to enquire concerning the manuſcript of Pliny the naturaliſt, relative to the wars of the Germans, ſaid to be at Madgeburg. Though I have not yet received any anſwer, I believe it to be the tale of a traveller; for you may reſt perſuaded, did any ſuch manuſcript exiſt, it would be known. Neither I nor any of the learned here have ever heard it mentioned.

I can anſwer with more preciſion, concerning the lady, who pretended to paſs for the widow of the czarowitz. Her impoſition has been diſcovered at Brunſwick, whither ſhe went, ſoon after the death of the lady whoſe name ſhe borrowed. She received charity there, with an order to quit the country, and never to aſſume a name from which ſhe was by birth ſo diſtant. I would have you believe that the Ruſſians know how effectually to kill; and that, when they expedite any one to the other world, eſpecially at court, we never hear of a reſurrection. The reverſe might happen among us; we are not ſufficiently practiſed in the trade. I would therefore

therefore have you aſk, when you meet with any one who has thus riſen again—" Pray, ſir, or " madam, where did you happen to be killed?" You will judge of the veracity of the anſwer by the country which ſhall be named. If Judea be the place, you know that reſurrection was there practiſed. Should Pruſſia be mentioned, I would have you doubt; and, if it be Ruſſia, do not believe a ſyllable of the matter. And here ends my excellent diſſertation, worthy of the Academy of Inſcriptions and Belles Lettres.

A propos of academies. I have met with ſome works in which there is no lack of praiſe, on the French, written by candidates for places in the French academy, and who by ſuch means have been ſucceſsful. I have determined to enter the liſts; and, that I may be elected one of your forty babblers, I propoſe to myſelf to write an apology for ſome of the campaigns of your generals, in the laſt war. The work will ſoon be finiſhed, and I ſhall dedicate it to national vanity; conſequently I ſuppoſe I ſhall ſoon become your brother academician.

Enough for the preſent; if you wiſh me to prattle more, you need but provoke me, by a new letter.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER LXXXIV.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, January 2, 1772.

I FEAR your majeſty will ſuppoſe me at leaſt an attorney, or ſomething worſe, from the liberty I have taken to ſend you ſo many papers, with this letter. But, before I relate the purpoſe of theſe papers, I ought to begin by an object beyond compariſon more intereſting to me: I mean, ſire, the very humble thanks which I am indebted to your majeſty, for the charming verſes you have done me the honour to ſend me, and for the extreme pleaſure I received from reading theſe verſes. The epiſtle of your majeſty, to the queen of Sweden, abounds in philoſophy and feeling: it is alſo very forcible againſt the detractors of kings, who ought to be reſpected, even when they err. The poem on the Confederates is a very agreeable work, full of imagination, of incident, and eſpecially of humour, which was no eaſy thing, the gloomineſs of the ſubject conſidered.

There is, among various paſſages of the poem which deſerve to be remembered, a line concerning which I requeſt an explanation, from your majeſty. Is the picture of the maſſacre of St. Bartholomew, at the palace of the biſhop of Kiow, a hiſtori-

a hiſtorical fact, or only a probable fiction, conſiſtent with the ſentiments of the prelate, and ſimilar to thoſe in which the poets indulge?

I am acquainted with ſome philoſophers who have pity on theſe poor Confederates, and whom they really ſuppoſe to be fighting for their freedom. Did they know that the whole library of the prelate, who is one of their chiefs, conſiſts only of ſuch a picture, I have no doubt but they would then ſay, as the friend of La Brinvilliers did, who was informed that ſhe had poiſoned her father—"Indeed!—That is not ſo well as "I could have wiſhed*."

However, ſire, I am very deſirous of, and wait with the greateſt impatience for, the continuation of the poem, of which I entreat your majeſty not to deprive me. My moſt ardent wiſh is that the title of the laſt canto may be PEACE CONFERRED, BY FREDERIC THE GREAT, ON THE CONFEDERATES AND DISSIDENTS; THE TURKS AND RUSSIANS; EUROPE AND ASIA. Your majeſty will then reſemble the judge who, ſending for the parties, began by ridiculing their cauſe of quarrel, and ended by inducing them to ſhake hands, and depart friends.

* *Si cela eſt, j'en rabats beaucoup.* Literally—If that be ſo, I ſhall make great abatement.

This, ſire, is what humanity hopes from you. And, however difficult ſuch reconciliation may be, it is perhaps leſs ſo than the re-eſtabliſhment of our finances; ruined as they are, by thirty years of war, by rapine, and by deſtructive operations. Nor is our poor republic of letters in much better repair; and I am ſorry that your majeſty has reaſon to accuſe my brethren of ſo many errors. I wiſh the juſt and ſage reflections which your majeſty has done me the honour to write, on this ſubject, were printed and paſted on the doors of all men of letters. With reſpect to my poor ſelf, I have at leaſt endeavoured to make my conduct conform, as much as poſſible, to principles ſo true and ſo certain; and thus to merit the bounties with which I have been honoured, by your majeſty.

I now come, ſire, to the two annexed papers. The title of the firſt is the hiſtory of madame de Maldack, and it contains the anecdotes, true or falſe, which I have been able to collect, concerning this pretended widow of the czarowitz. I find no difficulty to believe the whole ſtory to be an impoſition; but perhaps your majeſty will not be ſorry to know what has been reported in France, on the ſubject, during the life and after the death of that woman. This memorial was ſent me by a perſon who had a country houſe in the village in which ſhe lived; and perhaps

perhaps the court of Brunſwick, which had the goodneſs to grant her a ſmall penſion, and the court of Ruſſia, will be ſomewhat aſtoniſhed at the particulars, and the tale, which this female adventurer has thought proper to relate.

The other paper is an article intended for the gazette of the Lower Rhine, in which, ſire, a family in every reſpect worthy, and with which I have long lived in friendſhip, is intereſted. It has pleaſed the editor of the gazette at Cleves, in your majeſty's ſtates, or as your majeſty pleaſantly calls him that poſt-boy, who follows fame (not to mention that this poſt-boy winds nothing better than a cow's horn) it has pleaſed I ſay this paragraph writer, in No 88, to inſert an article injurious to the family, relative to the death of a relation, a man of merit, lately deceaſed. The family implores your majeſty's protection; not to puniſh the wretch, whom they pardon, but to ſend the annexed retractation, with a command to inſert it immediately, in his gazette, without the alteration of a ſyllable, and with a prohibition henceforth to ſpeak, good or ill, of that family, or any of its branches. As my friends are acquainted with your majeſty's goodneſs to me, they have entreated me to lay their prayers at your majeſty's feet; of which duty I acquit myſelf with eagerneſs and zeal, becauſe I am very earneſtly deſirous of obliging them. I therefore

moſt humbly entreat and conjure your majeſty to be pleaſed to iſſue your orders, for the ſatisfaction of this worthy and reſpectable family.

I ſcarcely have room to requeſt your majeſty would inform me if the hiſtory of Germany, by Pliny, be found at Magdeburg; which I, like you, cannot ſuppoſe; and to wiſh that the coming year may be as glorious to your majeſty as all the paſt. In theſe ſentiments of profound reſpect, eternal gratitude, &c.

LETTER LXXXV.

From the King.

January 26, 1772.

BY your anſwer, I perceive there are many objects which improve by being ſeen at a diſtance; and of this number the Confederates of Poland well may be. We who are the neighbours of theſe ſavage people, and who are acquainted with individuals and the chiefs of parties, think them worthy of nothing but hiſſes. The confederation has been formed by fanaticiſm. The chiefs are all divided among themſelves, and each has his views, and different projects. They act with imprudence, fight with cowardice,

cowardice, and are only capable of ſuch kind of crimes as cowards can commit. Had I a biſhop Turpin, or an abbot Trithemius at my diſpoſal, I ſhould willingly cite his authority; but, as no perſon in Poland has learned to write, I am obliged to depend on my own, for the facts which I have related in the poem; and, as mathematical demonſtration was not in queſtion, it ſeemed to me I was at liberty to indulge my fancy. I will not anſwer that the biſhop of Kiow really had a picture of the maſſacre of St. Bartholomew at his reſidence. Henry III. was preſent at this holy butchery; he might have had it painted, and have given the picture to the then biſhop of Kiow, as a proof that he himſelf was orthodox; and it might have deſcended from that biſhop to the preſent, who could not be better pleaſed, had he the power, than by exciting a ſimilar maſſacre, in his own country.

By the conſpiracy which theſe wretches had projected againſt their king, you may perceive of how much their phrenzy is capable. Their cauſe of hatred againſt their ſovereign is that he is not ſufficiently rich, to beſtow penſions equal to their avarice. They would prefer a foreign prince, who could gratify their profuſion from his hereditary domains. I pity philoſophers that intereſt themſelves concerning this people, who

are in every reſpect contemptible. Their only excuſe is their ignorance. Poland has no laws; nor does it enjoy what is called liberty, but its government has degenerated into licentious anarchy. Its lords exerciſe the moſt cruel tyranny over their ſlaves. In a word, of all the governments of Europe, that of Turkey excepted, it is the worſt.

I incloſe two cantos of the ſame poem, in this letter, and they will have ſome merit, ſhould they conduce to remove the ſpleen of thoſe by whom they may be read.

You ſuppoſe that peace may be made, between inimical powers, with as much facility as bad poetry; yet would I ſooner undertake to turn the whole Jewiſh hiſtory into madrigals, than to inſpire three ſovereigns, two of whom are women, with the ſame ſentiments. Still I am not diſcouraged, nor will it be my fault, ſhould not peace be concluded with all the ſpeed I deſire. When your neighbour's houſe is on fire, extinguiſh the conflagration, leſt the flame ſhould reach your own. Thus does the fifteenth Louis act. But for his infinite aſſiduity, Spain and England would now be at war, in the four quarters of the known world. Each year that peace is prolonged ought to re-eſtabliſh his finances. A kingdom like France is inexhauſtible in reſources; and there muſt be very ill manage-

management, if its debts cannot be paid, with a revenue of four hundred millions of livres. (Sixteen millions and a half ſterling.) Your academies will ſoon grow rich, and your academicians will roll in wealth.

Poor Helvetius will no longer roll on any thing! I heard of his death with infinite grief; his character appeared to me admirable. It were perhaps to have been deſired that he had conſulted his mind leſs, and his heart more. I imagine ſome poſthumous works by him will appear. It is rumoured that he has left a poem on happineſs, of which I hear a good character. I will read it ſhould it be printed.

The work of Pliny, which it has been pretended was at Magdeburg, cannot be found. It is ſaid the manuſcript is at Augſburg; but theſe are vain reports: no ſuch work apparently exiſts.

The hiſtory of madame de Maldack, the ſelf-called czarowitzina, is equally falſe. It appears to me that ſhe was one of the wardrobe-women of the princeſs whoſe name ſhe aſſumed. Her hiſtory is one chain of falſehoods. The counteſs of Kœnigſmark never ſet foot in Ruſſia; nor did marſhal Saxe ever ſee the wife of the czarowitz; he therefore could not diſcover her in madame de Maldack. It ſhould particularly be remarked that, had a princeſs as

ſhe

ſhe pretends to have been, by miracle eſcaped from Ruſſia, ſhe would have ſought a natural aſylum in the boſom of her family, and not have become an adventurer, like the creature of whom you ſpeak. She might have borne ſome reſemblance to her miſtreſs; and on this her impoſition was founded, that ſhe might obtain ſome conſideration. But ſhe took good care not to appear at Brunſwick, becauſe the czarowitzina was too well known, by her family, for her relations to be abuſed by a vague reſemblance, or by a tale which would have betrayed her deceit.

You have given me charge of another commiſſion, which is to me more embarraſſing; eſpecially as I am neither a corrector of the preſs, nor a cenſor of gazettes. I imagine the family of Loiſeau de Mauléon went to ſchool with Franc de Pompignan, and that it ſuppoſes the eyes of all Europe fixed upon, and the whole world employed concerning, this family. For my own part, I who live in Germany and know what paſſes there, can on my honour aſſure the family of Mauléon that there are very few people who know ſuch a family exiſts; and that thoſe who are beſt acquainted with it are perhaps ſome forty perſons, who have read the caſe which that advocate drew up in favour of

Calas,

Calas. I can ſolemnly aſſure you that not a man in Germany oppoſes the nobility of that family; that it is wholly indifferent to the diet of Ratiſbon, whether the advocate died of a polypus at the heart or a ſpitting of blood; whether the ducheſs of Orleans did or did not conſult his father; and, in fine, this diet is well ſatisfied that the advocates of Paris, the court of aids, the tournelle, the grand chamber, the preſidents à mortier, and the chancellor ſhould live or die, when and how they pleaſe. Germany gives her promiſe to remain in equal ignorance.

With reſpect to the gazette editor of the Lower Rhine, the family of Mauléon muſt be ſatisfied that he remains undiſturbed; remembering that, if the liberty of the preſs be not indulged, the mind of man muſt remain in darkneſs: and all the encyclopediſts, of whom I am a zealous diſciple, exclaim againſt the office of cenſor, and inſiſt that each man has a right to explain and print his thoughts.

Adminiſter this, as a cooling powder, to the family of the advocate, which affords ſymptoms of inflammatory fever, and which diſeaſe it will be good to prevent by phlebotomy, and frequent emulſions. How many people are there, my good D'Alembert, who only ſee objects

through thoſe great teleſcopes with which the ſatellites of Saturn are obſerved! Their eyes ought for a time to be reduced to a microſcopic regimen*, that they might learn better to eſtimate the ſize of objects, and if poſſible of themſelves. But I have ſaid too much for this time.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER LXXXVI.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, March 3, 1772.

THE letter your majeſty has done me the honour to write, dated January 26, I did not receive till the 21ſt of the laſt month; for, your majeſty having unfortunately been attacked by the gout, you were during three weeks unable to ſign the letter. I ſhould immediately have replied, had I not myſelf been attacked, at the time when it came to hand, by a kind of gout in the head; or more properly ſpeaking by the rheumatiſm, which equally prevented ſleep and application.

* The king ſeems to have forgotten that the microſcope, like the teleſcope, magnifies objects; and that its uſe is to render ſmall things apparently great. T.

The

The charming poetry your majeſty had the goodneſs to ſend me was ill calculated to cure my want of ſleep. The two new cantos do not ſeem to me inferior to the two former. I was particularly delighted by the picture of the catholic church, in the third; and by the alliance which thence reſulted, between the moſt catholic Confederates and the moſt chriſtian Muſtapha; and, in the fourth, the deliverance which the bleſſed Virgin Mary procures the Confederates, when beſieged, by petitioning her ſon, is imagined with true poetic pleaſantry. I am particularly pleaſed, in the work, to find that imagination never leads reaſon aſtray; that they never were in any place better friends; and that your majeſty has the art every where to conform to the precept of Horace, and to mingle the uſeful and the agreeable.

I know not what my brother philoſophers may think of the Confederates. I can well believe that they have loſt nothing, by having been ſeen at a diſtance; but if theſe Confederates complain, wright or wrong, of being oppreſſed by Ruſſia, I likewiſe hear a hundred thouſand peaſants, and more, who do or may complain, not wrongfully but with very good cauſe, of having been from time immemorial oppreſſed by theſe ſame Confederates; and,

while the latter ſhall remain oppreſſors, I only compare their enemy to a maſter, who beſtows on his valet de chambre thoſe kicks which the valet returns to the ſcullion.

Such is the picture which my imagination draws of the preſent ſtate of Poland; nor am I ſurpriſed that your majeſty ſhould endeavour to prevent, if poſſible, the war from ſpreading; and thoſe ills, with which this unfortunate country is already overwhelmed, from being increaſed. Theſe projects and theſe views are well worthy the ſoul of your majeſty. I know more; I know you have made propoſals, to a great power in Europe, to become a mediator; and I wiſh, for a thouſand reaſons, that the reſpectable efforts of your majeſty might be ſucceſsful. But I ſhall abſtain as I ought from penetrating into the counſel and intentions of kings; and ſhall ſatisfy myſelf with petitioning, at the gates of their palaces, that wiſdom and the love of humanity may be ſeated, with them, on the throne. Should there be any place of retreat for the ghoſts of ſages, I have no doubt but that poor Helvetius, be he where he will, offers up prayers, ſimilar to thoſe of your majeſty and mine, for the peace and proſperity of the wretched human race. I deeply regret the loſs of this worthy, amiable, and virtuous philoſopher; who to the reſpectable

able qualities which rendered him dear to me, added one which more particularly attached him to my affections; and this was the ſentiments of reſpect and admiration with which his heart overflowed for your majeſty. How often have you been the ſubject of our converſation! How often while ſpeaking of you have our hearts glowed, and melted with mutual tenderneſs! How often have we delighted to repeat the obligations, of every kind, which letters and philoſophy have to you, in this unfortunate age!

I expected, ſire, that the pretended work of Pliny was a chimæra. Nor could I doubt of the deception of the wardrobe woman, who aſſumed the name of her miſtreſs, the wife of the czarowitz. Neither will I further inſiſt on what relates to the family of Mauléon, for I reſpect your majeſty's manner of thinking on this ſubject. Not but I ſhould have been better pleaſed if, inſtead of ridiculing the poor Encyclopediſts for their wiſhes, real or pretended, in favour of the liberty of the preſs, you had been kind enough to have afforded me ſome information, and acquainted me with what your thoughts on this great queſtion are. To induce you ſo to do, I could almoſt venture to hazard ſome reflexions myſelf, on the ſubject. I know not whether it be a liberty that ought to be granted,

but think that, if it be, it ought to be indefinite, and unlimited. For why ſhould any one be permitted rather to inſult an honeſt citizen, to tell him he is a knave, or if you pleaſe the ſon of a footman, than to tell the man in office he is a thief, a fool, or a tyrant? In a word, if perſonal ſatire be permitted, which I think ought not to be, I know not why it ſhould be confined to the feeble, and the little; and why the ſtrong, and the great, ſhould not have their ſhare.

But I believe, in all well-regulated ſtates, whether monarchical or republican, this kind of ſatire ought to be prohibited, from the loweſt to the moſt exalted ranks in ſociety: for in fine all the citizens have an equal right to protection, and the preſervation of that moral exiſtence of which they are, or are endeavoured to be, deprived by ſatire.

With reſpect to works of every kind, whether literary, philoſophic, or political, I think men ſhould have free liberty to write on ſuch ſubjects; and even to blame, provided that ſatire ſhould have no part in them: for, once again, the end of the liberty of the preſs ſhould be to enlighten, and not to offend. But it is time for me to check the liberty of my pen, and I conclude with wiſhing your majeſty full deliverance from gout and war, and by renewing the aſſurances

ances of admiration, eternal gratitude, and profound reſpect, with which I am, &c.

LETTER LXXXVII.

From the King.

April 7, 1772.

I KNOW not what accident continually happens to throw impediments in my way, whenever I mean to anſwer your letters. Lately the gout confined me to my couch, and now the viſit of the queen dowager of Sweden, and the dutcheſs of Brunſwick, has prevented me from writing to you. But you have ſuffered no great loſs; on the contrary, you have avoided aſſaſſination by a vile collection of rhimes; I ſend you another canto of the poem. I hope that, full of narcotic virtue, it will ſupply the want of thoſe poppies which Morpheus refuſes to beſtow. We Germans, as good father Bouhours has well ſaid, are but ill adapted to poetry, and eſpecially to epic poetry; we only poſſeſs the heavy inſtinct of good ſenſe, and our Pegaſus has no wings. I muſt anſwer you as Van H..en did Voltaire, who praiſed him for

his poem of Leonidas—" My verſes are good," ſaid he, " for I have no imagination."

Helvetius it is ſaid has left a poem on Happineſs, among his papers. Let me requeſt you to enquire. I confeſs I ſhould be glad to poſſeſs it, if there be nothing imprudent in ſuch a wiſh. I have much regretted this philoſopher, who has afforded marks of being peculiarly diſintereſted, and whoſe heart was as pure as his mind was eaſily led aſtray. But philoſophers are not leſs ſubject to the eternal laws of nature than other men; who, wiſe or fooliſh, great or ſmall, are equally obliged to pay Nature's debt; or rather to reſtore what ſhe for a time has lent.

It is very probable that the good Helvetius no longer reads gazettes, nor eccleſiaſtical intelligence; and that conſequently he does not trouble himſelf much concerning the wars of the Confederates, or the Turks. Should however any of the news-writers of Paris ſend their gazettes into the country where he is, they may inform him that theſe troubles are ſoon to be appeaſed, and that a general peace will cloſe the wounds which paſt calamities have made; and they may add that the Confederates no doubt will remain cuckolds, beaten, and contented *. The news-writers will be the only

* *Cocu, battu, et content.*—The title of a French comedy by *Raimond Poiſſon.* T.

people,

people who will be diſſatisfied, to ſee an end to the war, for there will be then an end to their babbling, and conjectures, which they at a venture make, and of the falſe intelligence which they publiſh to-day, that they may contradict it to-morrow.

Such is my confeſſion of faith, relative to gazette writers, and in anſwer to what you have aſked. But, if you wiſh to know what I think of the liberty of the preſs, and of thoſe ſatirical works which are the inevitable conſequence, I will own to you, without intending however to ſhock the gentlemen Encyclopediſts, whom I reſpect, that, knowing men as I do, from tolerably long experience, I am well perſuaded they ſtand in need of phyſick, and that they will continually abuſe the freedom they enjoy; ſo that in what relates to books, their works ought to be ſubject to examination; not rigorouſly made, but in ſuch a manner however as to ſuppreſs whatever ſhall be diſcovered contrary to the public tranquillity, becauſe ſatire is injurious to the good of ſociety. But, at the ſame time, I will not diſſemble that I think it very ridiculous for the family of a petty advocate formally to complain of a genealogical affront. Your advocate, or his relations, ought rather to rejoice that Loiſeau de Mauléon is treated like the

grandees of the earth, whoſe genealogies are equally inaccurate. If however this diſtreſſed family muſt have ſatisfaction, we can find men of erudition, in Germany, who will ſhow that the defunct is a deſcendant, in a right line, from the ancient kings of Leon and Caſtile; and I dare venture to promiſe that this excellent diſcovery ſhall be inſerted in the courier of the Lower Rhine. This is all I ſhall be able to effect for the reconciliation of theſe two illuſtrious parties. Nor ſhall I be a little vain of the act: I will inſert in my memoirs that, having contributed to pacify the troubles of Poland and Turkey, I was likewiſe ſo highly favoured, by fortune, as to be ſucceſsful in eſtabliſhing peace between Mauléon and the courier of the Lower Rhine. After this, my dear Anaxagoras, I hope your philoſophy will be ſatisfied with mine. I labour all in my power to conciliate the minds of men. I propoſe expedients, and I hope the family of Mauléon will not be more intractable than the grand ſignor, and his divan. Provided with full powers, you may ſign this important act for the welfare of Europe, and thus reſtore to the courier of the Lower Rhine all the tranquillity and freedom of mind of which he ſtands in need, for the circulation of his ribaldry.

After

After having diſcuſſed affairs of ſuch magnitude, I can only offer up prayers for your preſervation, recal to your mind the ſmall philoſophic flock that is to be found on the ſhores of the Baltic, and aſſure you of my perſonal eſteem.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER LXXXVIII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, May 16, 1772.

PERMIT me to begin my letter by a compliment, which I think due to your majeſty, on the ſucceſs of a man of ſcience, whom your goodneſs has made known to Europe, and the glory of whoſe ſucceſs is attributed to your academy, in which you have been pleaſed to give him a diſtinguiſhed ſeat. This is the fourth or fifth time that M. de la Grange, with the greateſt and beſt merited eulogium, has obtained the prize of our academy of ſciences; and I believe I may venture to announce, to your majeſty, that he will in a few days, be elected a foreign aſſociate of our academy. To be an aſſociate is

very honourable, for the aſſociates are very few. The diſtinction is eagerly ſought after, and only obtained by the moſt celebrated of the literati of Europe; and that generally in their old age, whereas I believe that M. de la Grange is at preſent but five and thirty. I daily rejoice, more and more, that I was ſo fortunate as to procure your academy a philoſopher who is ſo eſtimable for his uncommon talents, his profound knowledge, and his prudent and diſintereſted character. I have no doubt your majeſty will be pleaſed to acquaint him with your ſatisfaction. This hope is founded on the eſteem which your majeſty has continually entertained for him, as you have more than once done me the honour to inform me, and on the excellent diſcourſe which you have lately read to your academy, and which you have had the goodneſs to ſend me. This diſcourſe, ſire, I had previouſly read in a literary gazette, which is printed at Deux Ponts, and had admired the ſound philoſophy it contains, the juſt views it preſents, worthy of a great king, the eloquence with which it is written, and the thunder which your majeſty hurls againſt thoſe empirics, ſacred and profane, and teachers of error, who are paid to brutalize human nature; and likewiſe againſt detractors of the ſciences, another ſpecies of em-

pirics

pirics and hypocrites, as contemptible as the former.

Nor have I read the fifth canto of the poem, againſt the Confederates, with leſs pleaſure and admiration. Yet perhaps I ought to entreat mercy of your majeſty for my poor countrymen the Gauls, whoſe fame and exploits, at Roſbach, Crevelt, and elſewhere, you have ſo pleaſantly celebrated. But, ſire, the part of that fame, or that ſhame, which appertains to me is ſo ſmall that I lay no claim to it, but grant it, with all its honours, to any perſon who ſhall think it worthy their acceptance. As I have not the advantage nor the misfortune to be either a miniſter or a general, I ſhall leave them to enjoy their renown in peace. I neither aſk a part in the laurels they gather, nor in the ſcourges they may receive; and, happen what may, I ſhall never ſay to them—"I cry halves"—like our ſtreet-beggars, when one of their own order is raking a rag out of the channel.

Yet, ſire, I will confeſs, the pleaſure I receive from your verſe and proſe, however great it may be, is not more lively than that which I feel at one paſſage in the letter, which your majeſty has done me the honour to write to me, and in which you announce the approach of peace. This great act will be attributed to your majeſty by all Europe;

rope; nor will it be the leaſt glorious circumſtance of your life.

The poem of poor Helvetius, on Happineſs, was left imperfect. It is however affirmed that it will be printed, even in its ſtate of imperfection; and indeed I hear it is now in the preſs, in Holland; the truth of which your majeſty may eaſily learn.

It is now a month, ſire, ſince I acquired a new office. I am appointed ſecretary to the French academy; a place which rather demands aſſiduity than labour. Its emoluments are trifling, and the diſguſt and diſagreeable circumſtances attending it, when literature is more than ever oppreſſed and perſecuted, in France, are ſufficiently great. I will not trouble your majeſty with a detail of the vexations, of every kind, which philoſophy and literature ſuffer; ſince, not being able to afford any remedy, the narrative would but afflict you. You can but protect the arts and ſciences in your own kingdom, weep at their deſtiny in other parts, and by your leſſons and your example encourage thoſe who cultivate them. And why ſhould ſages complain? They will read that charming paſſage, which begins the fifth canto of your poem, on the misfortunes common to all kingdoms; they will caſt

caſt their eyes on ſurrounding objects, and will repeat this beautiful line of your majeſty's—

C'eſt même joie et ce ſont mêmes pleurs.*

I am, with every ſentiment of profound reſpect, gratitude, and admiration, which will end only with life, &c.

LETTER LXXXIX.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, June 1, 1772.

A YOUNG officer, full of ardour, and poſſeſſed of knowledge and underſtanding, whoſe name is M. de Guibert, deſires to lay that homage at your majeſty's feet which all military men, and all philoſophers, owe you. He entreats your majeſty would kindly receive the work which accompanies this, and of which he is the author; and, as he knows the bounty with which your majeſty honours me, he has entreated me to preſent you his book, and his profound reſpects.

Quintilian ſays, the progreſs made in eloquence ought to be eſtimated by the pleaſure

* Thus grief and joy are every where the ſame.

received

received in the reading of Cicero. Were we to judge of the progreſs made in the military art by a like rule, I have reaſon to believe, ſire, that the progreſs of M. de Guibert is great, from the profound admiration with which he is penetrated for the genius which your majeſty has imparted to that neceſſary but fatal art. But of this the Cæſar of our age muſt judge; and, ſhould he think the work worthy of any eſtimation, the author will be highly delighted with the praiſe Cæſar ſhall pleaſe to beſtow, which will be the nobleſt recompenſe his labour can receive.

The Academy of Sciences, at Paris, has elected M. de la Grange a foreign aſſociate, as I have previouſly announced to your majeſty. He was indebted for a unanimity of votes to his own ſuperior merit, and at the ſame time to the aſſurance I gave my fellow academicians that they would perform an act agreeable to your majeſty, whoſe name is ſo dear, ſo precious, to the ſciences, by the protection you grant them, and the knowledge with which they are enriched by you.

Europe hopes that your majeſty will not reſt ſatisfied with inſtructing her, but that you will procure her peace. As I have no doubt of your majeſty's great influence, in the treaty between

the Porte and Ruſſia, I take the liberty to recommend one object, which I continually have at heart; and that is to obtain, from Sultan Muſtapha, the rebuilding of the temple of Jeruſalem, that the Sorbonne may be embarraſſed, and philoſophy find recreation. Yet I ſtill more ardently deſire that the Being, whatever he may be, who preſides over the univerſe, ſhould long preſerve your majeſty for the good of that poor philoſophy which is perſecuted, or vilified, almoſt every where, except in your ſtates.

I am, with the utmoſt reſpect, &c.

LETTER XC.

From the King.

June 20, 1772.

I BEGIN by congratulating you on your new academical dignity, which proves that merit ſtill meets reward in France, and that the nation can diſcern thoſe whoſe great talents are worthy of recompenſe. You know that Apollo promiſes his diſciples nothing more than a few ſprigs of laurel, and praiſe. Theſe you at preſent enjoy, in the moſt celebrated academy of Europe,

Europe, whence you diſtribute honours on great men, and ſuch as diſtinguiſh themſelves among foreign nations. I am glad to ſee our La Grange one of the number. I am too ignorant of the mathematics to judge of his ſcientific merit, but I have ſufficient knowledge to do juſtice to his character, which is mild and modeſt.

The approbation you beſtow on the ſhort academical diſcourſe, read in the preſence of the queen of Sweden, renders it ſupportable to me: for, in reality, ſuch ſubjects are worn threadbare. Every hearer divines what can be ſaid; all that I could do was to preſent the picture under another point of view, relative to the good of the ſtate. My ſucceſs will ſurpaſs my hopes, ſhould this attempt awaken, in the minds of readers, the love of the ſciences, and a taſte for the fine arts; but I can expect no ſuch miracles. Provided this taſte be promoted in Pruſſia, and all my efforts are that it ſhould be, I ought to be ſatisfied. The ſciences are travellers; they have been in Greece, Italy, France, and England. And why ſhould they not make ſome ſtay in Pruſſia? This may be hoped, and the very ſuppoſition gives me great pleaſure.

Do you know that you have made me very proud? What! One of the forty of the French academy cite my Teutonic poetry! I really be-

gin to believe myſelf a poet; and, as ſoon as that peace which you do me the honour to attribute to me ſhall be concluded, I will ſend you the ſixth canto.

I have written to Holland, to obtain the poſthumous works of poor Helvetius, but have not received any anſwer. I imagine the work is not yet come from the preſs. He was a worthy man, and I ſhall read his works again with pleaſure.

I am to have grand company in a few days. The queen of Sweden is coming here, with a part of her family, and I ſhall have Phedra and Mahomet performed, for her entertainment. The actors who are to play theſe tragedies are but juſt arrived, I cannot therefore judge of their talents.

We have juſt loſt Touſſaint, and I am in want of a good rhetorician in his place. I have thought of De Lille, the tranſlator of Virgil, to whom I beg you will make the propoſal. Should he refuſe, I entreat you would mention ſome other perſon of merit, and who may become eminent in the belles lettres, as a member of our academy. I ſend you commiſſions, but who is more capable of executing them than yourſelf? For which reaſon I ſhall be glad if you will take this trouble.

On which I pray, &c.

LET-

LETTER XCI.

From the King.

July 23, 1772.

I DID not expect to receive a work on tactics from a philoſopher, who is an Encyclopediſt. This is as if the pope were to addreſs a work to me on toleration. I have not entirely read the book of the young officer; but, looking over the preface, I there found things which certainly deſerve to be corrected, that homage may be paid to truth. The young author inconſiderately affirms that the Pruſſians are not brave; whereas it was to their valour that I was indebted for all my ſucceſs in war. This young man ought to have known that, however great may be the addreſs and dexterity of troops, they will never vanquiſh an enemy, except by driving him from the place in which he is poſted; and that this cannot be executed but by brave and determined men. The paſſage deſerving of cenſure ought to be effaced; for, by reading the titles of the chapters, I perceive it to be the work of a man of genius, who endeavours to gain information himſelf and to inform others, and who is waiting for an opportunity to diſtinguiſh himſelf. You will have the kindneſs to digeſt

digeſt this ſhort paſſage, concerning a profeſſion which you do not love, but under the protection of which all other profeſſions are exerciſed.

You do me much honour to ſuppoſe my influence ſo great with Muſtapha. There was but little difficulty to inſpire him with pacific ſentiments, becauſe he wanted the means of continuing the war; and, by prolonging it, he would have endangered the total overthrow of his empire. I will venture to foretel that the earth will not open, and vomit forth flames, to conſume the workmen who ſhall rebuild the temple of Jeruſalem. The treaſury of Muſtapha is too empty, after the enormous expences of the war, for him to undertake ſuch a work; nor are the Jews of Conſtantinople ſufficiently wealthy for the enterprize; therefore, to ſucceed, the Encyclopediſts muſt make a collection over the whole earth, and impoſe a tax on free thinkers, with which money we will raiſe the edifice, in deſpite of fire and flames.

Do not however imagine that, when the temple ſhall be built, the gentlemen of the Sorbonne will be unhorſed. They will find quibbles, diſtinctions, and ſophiſms, and perſuade mankind that the new temple will not ſtand upon the place on which the old was formerly built. At Paris, they will draw maps of Jeruſa-

lem, without ever having been there, and demonſtrate to the devout that God, by a miracle, laughing at the incredulous, ſo faſcinated their eyes that they choſe a ſpot very diſtant from that of the temple of Solomon, for the foundation of their edifice. Fanatics, who are determined that truth ſhall always be on their ſide, although they never reſpect truth, but are in the habit of lying with impunity, will never be found without an anſwer. Theſe good gentlemen however are ſo reviled, and in ſo much diſcredit, among thinking people, that they cannot become more contemptible than they already are. Let us therefore leave to doctor Tamponet, doctor Riboulet, and to the modern Garaſſes*, the feeble

* Garaſſe was a Jeſuit, whoſe writings, eſpecially againſt the famous advocate Paſquier, were remarkable for their virulence. Paſquier, as early as the ſixteenth century, pleading for the univerſity of Paris againſt the Jeſuits, enumerated their vices as a ſociety, and aſſerted they deſerved to be exterminated out of France. Garaſſe, among other paſſages not leſs amuſing for their abſurd acrimony, has the following—"Adieu "Maſter Paſquier; adieu wormwood; adieu lawyer without "conſcience; adieu head without brain; adieu man without "humanity; adieu Chriſtian without religion; adieu arch "enemy of the holy ſee; adieu unnatural ſon, that pro-"claimeſt thy mother's ſhame; adieu till the meeting of that "great parliament (the reſurrection) when thou ſhalt plead "no more for the univerſity." This was written after the death of the advocate, and addreſſed—"To the late Stephen "Paſquier, *wherever he may be.*" T.

argument

argument of Ammianus Marcellinus to prop up the old magic palace, which is falling to decay.

Philoſophers and divine minds, the children of univerſal reaſon, have taught men to think, and have at length ſwept from the imagination the tales of the Aſs's ſkin and Blue-beard, which have ſo long been held ſacred, by knaves in caſſocks. For this reaſon it is that I love theſe philoſophers, and that all men of ſenſe ought to erect altars to their memory. I ſhall dedicate a ſmall one to the Anaxagoras of the Encyclopedie, and addreſſing him ſhall ſay—" My common ſenſe " bleſſes thy ſuperior reaſon, that bruſhes " away the ruſt which clogs the wheels of the " machine of intelligence; that teaches men to " examine, to combine, to ſuſpect themſelves, " and to take nothing for granted, which experi- " ence has not proved." I ſhall then offer up a ſhort prayer to the fortunate genius of France— " Oh Genius, if ſtill thou protecteſt the empire " of the Gauls, watch over the days of Anaxa- " goras, who is the only one that remains of " their great men! Suffer not the ſickle of " Death to cut off his harveſt, when but half " ripe! Confirm his health, and let him behold " ſcions of ſcience riſing under his ſhade, that

" one day ſhall be capable of affording equal " ſhelter!"

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER XCII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, Auguſt 14, 1772.

I HAVE not been negligent in my endeavours to render myſelf worthy of the confidence with which your majeſty has been pleaſed to honour me, by empowering me to chooſe a profeſſor of rhetoric and logic, for your academy*. After the moſt exact enquiry, I believe I have ſucceeded, and have the honour to ſend a profeſſor to your majeſty, for whoſe capacity, character, and conduct, I think I may anſwer. I have written more at length to M. de Catt, who will inform your majeſty.

Not as a philoſopher and encyclopediſt did I take the liberty to ſend your majeſty the Eſſay on Tactics, by M. de Guibert, but, with all Eu-

* *Academie des gentilſhommes*—Founded by the king, for fifteen of the young nobility, immediately after the concluſion of the peace of 1763. T.

rope, as an admirer of the great and rare military talents of your majeſty, did I think it my duty to inform you of a work in which the homage due to thoſe ſublime talents is paid; a work of which your majeſty is the beſt judge the author can deſire, and whoſe approbation would be the moſt honourable, and the moſt flattering, he could receive. This approbation, ſire, ſhould there be any neceſſity, might counterbalance the judgment of all Europe: like as Lucan eſtimated the ſuffrage of Cato equal to that of the gods.

I perceive, with pain, your majeſty is not ſatisfied with the paſſage in the preliminary diſcourſe, in which you think the Pruſſians are accuſed of want of valour. I have not the work before me, to juſtify the author, who is departed on a journey of ſome months, and of whom I cannot demand what his reaſons could be for ſuch a reproach: yet am I very certain his intention could not have been to accuſe troops that have gained at leaſt twelve battles with the want of courage. I am perſuaded his meaning only could be that the Pruſſians would not have been ſo ſucceſsful, had they been nothing more than brave, and had they not poſſeſſed a general of ſuch conſummate knowledge in military manœuvres, which are

now more than ever neceſſary. This aſſertion, far from being a reproach, appears to me to be additional praiſe, both to theſe brave troops and, particularly, to the hero by whom they were commanded.

Such, ſire, is the anſwer I think my encyclopedic philoſophy may return to your majeſty, in juſtification of a young officer, with whoſe admiration of you, and eſteem for your troops, I am acquainted. I ſhall not be equally eager to juſtify myſelf, concerning your majeſty's accuſation that I do not love war. How would this be poſſible to a philoſophic ſovereign, who in his works has ſo well deſcribed the evils which war brings on mankind; who never made war, except when forced by circumſtances; whoſe whole endeavours, during four or five years, ſeem to have been to avoid war; and who, to obtain his purpoſe, has acted with prudence and equity ſuch as, at this moment, excites the admiration of all Europe?

I have no doubt that Muſtapha has the beſt of reaſons, to conform to the pacific ſentiments with which he has been inſpired by your majeſty; a new proof that you are as little in love with war as I am. But I am not quite ſatisfied to find your majeſty has not ſaid a ſingle word concerning the temple of Jeruſalem. The rebuilding of

of this temple, ſire, is my paſſion; as the deſtruction of the Chriſtian religion is that of the patriarch of Ferney. I well know that, did the doctors of the Sorbonne behold the temple ſtanding, they would find ſome mode of explaining away the prophecy. God be thanked, they have anſwered objections equally difficult. I ſtill however think well enough of them to preſume that, at leaſt for a ſhort time, and at firſt, they would find themſelves under ſome little embarraſſment; and I very much wiſh Muſtapha had the wit to play them this knave's trick: after which we ſhould go to maſs, as uſual, and ſhould only laugh a little the more at thoſe by whom maſs is ſaid.

I know not whether your majeſty will venture to inform the Ruſſians, your dear allies, of a little accident which has juſt happened, at Spa, to one of their countrymen. This perſon had paſſed ſome months at Paris, where he had learnt to dreſs with elegance. Accordingly, he had ordered a green coat, made in the height of the faſhion; but a horſe, ſeeing him thus dreſſed, miſtook him for a bundle of green fodder, and gave him ſo rude a bite in the ſhoulder, that the poor green man is ſeriouſly ill. I believe the uniform of the Ruſſian infantry is

green; would not this, ſire, be a good reaſon to have it changed?

I endeavour to laugh, ſire, when, alas! I have no great inclination; for, if the horſes at Spa miſtake Ruſſians for bundles of green fodder, fit to eat, the inquiſitors believe philoſophers to be bundles of ſtraw, fit for nothing but to make a blaze. I am diſguſted with writing, and, notwithſtanding the little eſteem in which your majeſty holds geometry, I ſhould take refuge in that aſylum, could my poor head ſupport the neceſſary application. I mean however to attempt a continuation of the hiſtory of the French academy; but how great will be my ſufferings, while I refrain from ſpeaking my thoughts. I ſhall even be happy if, while concealing them, I can but lead the reader to imagine what they are.

I am, with the moſt profound reſpect, moſt lively gratitude, and the moſt, &c.

LET-

LETTER XCIII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, Auguſt 22, 1772.

THIS letter will be preſented to you by M. Borelli, whom I have the honour to ſend to fill up the double poſt of the late M. Touſſaint, in the Royal Academy of the Nobles, and the Royal Academy of the Sciences, two ſeminaries which do equal honour to your majeſty; the one by its inſtitution, the other by its renewal, and the protection which is granted it by the philoſopher of kings, and the king of philoſophers. M. de Catt muſt already have rendered an account to your majeſty, of the minute and numerous enquiries I made, relative to M. Borelli. In conſequence of theſe, and what I know of his abilities and character, I am perſuaded he will merit the bounties with which I entreat your majeſty to be pleaſed to honour him. I have hitherto been tolerably ſucceſsful, in correſponding to the confidence placed in me by your majeſty, and in the choice of various perſons, which choice you have done me the honour to commit to my care; and I have every reaſon to hope I ſhall not, on the preſent occaſion, incur reproach.

M. Borelli,

M. Borelli, when he ſhall preſent this letter to your majeſty, is at the ſame time charged to deliver you a work, written by one of my friends, who has commiſſioned me to preſent his performance to a judge ſo excellent. The author, ſire, is M. le Chevalier de Chatellux; a man of quality, of one of the moſt ancient families in France; a brigadier in the royal army, poſſeſſed of underſtanding and merit, and penetrated with admiration for your majeſty. The conſtant application which the chevalier de Chatellux has beſtowed on his profeſſion, has not prevented him, after your majeſty's example, from ſucceſsfully cultivating letters and philoſophy. The work he has the honour to lay before your majeſty will prove that, to an extenſive knowledge of hiſtory, philoſophic views, and the love of humanity, he adds the talent of a writer.

The purport of his work is to prove that the human ſpecies is leſs wretched than formerly; and that, in conſequence of the progreſs of knowledge, evil will continually decreaſe. This I rather wiſh than hope; but, be your majeſty's thoughts on the ſubject what they may, I have reaſon to believe that the work will inſpire you with eſteem for the author; by which, ſhould your majeſty be pleaſed to inform him of it, he will be infinitely flattered: and he, ſire, is the

more

more deſerving of ſo ſoothing a mark of kindneſs by being, at preſent, almoſt the only perſon of diſtinguiſhed birth, in this unfortunate kingdom, who truly loves letters, and the literati. Ah! ſire, how much need has this wretched literature that a protector like yourſelf ſhould long be preſerved! Dating from the adminiſtration of cardinal de Fleury, and even farther back, how many years have paſſed away, in France, ſince letters have remained without encouragement, and deſtitute of reſpect! Nay they are even hated, at preſent; nor is there a man in office who is not their open or their ſecret enemy. Your majeſty, who has had the goodneſs to denote your ſatisfaction, at my new and inſignificant dignity of ſecretary of the French academy, cannot imagine all the artifices that were employed, to deprive me of the place. The members were far from unanimous in their votes. All the academicians of the court and the church, that is to ſay near one-third, were inimical to me. But it is a pleaſure to be judged by our peers; and I am conſoled and flattered that all my fellow members, who are men of letters, ſupported me; one only excepted, who is a prieſt, and a bigotted politician. A perſon of Verſailles has aſſured me that, notwithſtanding the plurality of votes, I ſhould have been excluded by the court, had not

not thoſe marks of bounty which I have received from foreigners, and eſpecially from your majeſty, been my protection. Nor is this the firſt time that I have felt how much I am indebted to your majeſty's bounty, for preſerving me from perſecution in my own country. Marſhal de Richelieu, the moſt bitter of the enemies of literature, philoſophy, and every kind of merit, the man ſo gratuitouſly celebrated by the philoſopher of Ferney, was at the head of the cabal. Enraged at his ill ſucceſs, he revenged himſelf on poor De Lille, the tranſlator of the Georgics, whom he has cauſed to be excluded from the academy, after having been almoſt unanimouſly voted one of its members, and though De Lille is as eſtimable for his character and conduct as he is for talents.

He is highly flattered and honoured by the deſire your majeſty has teſtified, to ſee an entire tranſlation of Virgil, executed by him. He has already finiſhed the fourth book, which appears to me excellent. The efforts of ſuperſtition are vain; men of letters are ants, and rebuild their city, when it has been deſtroyed.

I have been informed that the poem of M. Helvetius, on Happineſs, may be had at Deux Ponts, and that it is preceded by a very well written preface, with the author of which I am unacquainted.

unacquainted. I am likewiſe aſſured that another work by Helvetius, in proſe, and much more conſiderable, is now in the preſs. I am ignorant even of its title, but it is ſaid to be a kind of ſupplement to his book on the underſtanding *.

I am with the moſt profound reſpect, &c.

P. S. I take the liberty, ſire, to add to this prolix and dull letter a portrait, which has been engraved here, beneath which are verſes that my mathematical muſe has ventured to write on your majeſty, to whom I believe, bad as they are, they are already known. It is to me a precious portrait, becauſe it will remain a monument of the ſentiments with which I have long been devoted to your majeſty. I wiſh the lines were better; however I will be bold to ſay, with Boileau, though his ſubject was very different,

Non, non, ſur ce ſujet, pour écrire avec grâce,
Il ne faut point monter au ſommet du Parnaſſe;
Et, ſans aller rêver dans le double vallon,
Le ſentiment ſuffit, et vaut un Apollon †.

I have hung this portrait in my cabinet, be-

* *De l'Eſprit*—The title of the poſthumous work is—*De l'Homme & de ſes Facultés*: or, *Of Man and his Faculties*. T.

† To write on ſuch a ſubject well, we need not aſcend the Parnaſſian hill, nor dream in the double valley; to feel will be ſufficient, and equal to inſpiration.

tween

tween Deſcartes, Newton, Henry IV. and Voltaire; and I hope your majeſty will not reproach me, for having introduced you into bad company. I conclude, ſire, bluſhing at the waſte I have made of your precious time, and ſhall only add that, ſhould your majeſty ſtand in need of proper maſters, for your academy, for the young nobility, or any other purpoſe, I do not deſpair but that ſuch I ſhall be able to procure.

LETTER XCIV.

From the King.

September 17, 1772.

THE profeſſor of rhetoric, whom you have procured for me, adds to my former obligations, and will contribute to the improvement of an academy which I have much at heart, and the progreſs of which has hitherto tolerably well anſwered my expectations. The care of education is an important object to ſovereigns, which ought not to be neglected, and which I extend to the provinces. Such are the amuſements of my old age. I in a manner renounce that fine profeſſion on which M. de Guibert gives ſuch eloquent leſſons. War demands the

ardour of youth, and ill correſponds with my weight of years. Not to mention that, in conformity to the ſentiments of our maſters, the Encyclopediſts, I do not content myſelf with maintaining my ſmall domains in peace, but preach peace to others. I hope the Turk will liſten to me, though there are ſome who addict themſelves to the trade *, and who preach war. However, I have a cloſing period in my pocket, which I hope will convince more effectually than all the fine phraſes of theſe warlike preachers. In fine, you ſhall have the ſixth canto of the confederates, that you may be in poſſeſſion of all the follies which enter my imagination.

In quality of prophet, I foretel peace; although it is not yet concluded. Were the difficulties to be removed not ſo numerous, the building of the temple of Jeruſalem ſhould be one of the articles; but we muſt not at preſent add a condition which would but embroil the buſineſs. This may become the ſubject of a private treaty. Let not the Sorbonne however have the leaſt intimation of the matter, or you will ſee the purſes of the devout emptied, and the pureſt of your gold ſent into Turkey, to

* *Qui ſe mêle du metier.*—Alluding I imagine to the Mufti and the Ulemats, who the king tells us, in another paſſage, were bribed by the French and promoted the continuance of the war. T.

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counteract the patrons of the temple. Were the temple however to be built, the ſquare caps of the Sorbonne would maintain, with their hackneied ſophiſms and a moſt noble effrontery, that fact is falſehood. So hard, ſo repulſive, are the ſculls of prieſts; eſpecially of doctors. We have ſeen them ſupport their opinions in deſpite of proof. You will laugh at them, and they will anathematize you; but no matter, laugh on.

I know not whether the horſes of Spa do or do not eat Ruſſians, but I certainly know it is a food the Janiſſaries cannot digeſt. I hope this adventure will not be inſerted in the hiſtory of your academy, of which you will acquit yourſelf with ability equal to what you have always hitherto diſcovered. The academy certainly could not have made a better choice of a perpetual ſecretary; and, now that Fontenelle is no more, it was the only means to have their memoirs read. I ſhall be one of your readers and admirers, and among thoſe who intereſt themſelves in whatever concerns your happineſs and preſervation.

On which I pray, &c.

J. E T.

LETTER XCV.

From the King.

October 6, 1772.

M. BORELLI is juſt arrived, and has given me the packet you committed to his charge. As far as I can judge, he appears to be able and exceedingly willing. I immediately explained to him the nature of his duties; and as, in the plan of education which is adopted by the academy, there are methods greatly different from many of thoſe practiſed by other ſchools, theſe I pointed out to him, and have no doubt but he will anſwer the expectation which his good name, and particularly your approbation has excited. The deſire I have to ſee this my little inſtitution ſucceed renders me much the more grateful for all ſuch aids as can promote its progreſs. The further we advance in life, the more we are convinced of the wrong done to ſociety, by the neglect of education in youth. I take all poſſible means to correct this abuſe, and reform the colleges, univerſities, and even the village ſchools. But the fruits of ſuch cares cannot be gathered in leſs than thirty years; they are not to be enjoyed by me. I however

ſhall conſole myſelf, by procuring my country an advantage of which it was deſtitute.

I really do not underſtand you French people. Does your nation ſuppoſe that the high reputation it acquired, in the time of Louis XIV. was founded on any other baſis than the advantages it derived from the ſtudy of the arts and ſciences, dignified by that air of grandeur which the monarch imparted to all his actions? It ought to be remembered, at Paris, that Athens formerly drew a concourſe of people from all nations, and that even its conquerors, the Romans, repaired thither to ſtudy, and gain information. Athens at preſent is become deſolate, and is viſited by no man. Paris is menaced by a ſimilar fate, ſhould it not better know how to preſerve the advantages it poſſeſſes. Incloſed is a letter for the chevalier de Chatellux. His equals were formerly numerous in France. Nobility deſtitute of knowledge is a vain title, which places an ignorant man in the glare of day, and expoſes him to the irony of thoſe who ſhall thus ſeek amuſement.

By what you have written, I perceive the academy, like the court, has its intrigues. Perſons of reſtleſs minds every where cabal; but true merit ſurmounts all ſuch obſtacles. It ſtruggles, makes its way through the crowd, and

and is finally triumphant. This has happened to you, and the ſame cannot fail to happen to M. de Lille, who in my opinion is more an academician than one half of your forty.

From your poſtſcript, I learn you have very honourably placed an engraving of me in the company of people ſuperior to what I am, or can ever become.

I ſend you a medal which has been ſtruck, in conſequence of an event that intereſts the Sarmatians, and I know not whom *. I wiſh it had been ſtruck in conſequence of the concluſion of peace; but, in deſpite of artifice and machinations, this peace will be concluded; and, if ſo it ſhall pleaſe the Fates, in a ſhort time. I then flatter myſelf, according to the hopes given me by M. Borelli, I ſhall have the pleaſure to ſee you, and perſonally be able to aſſure you of the eſteem I have for you.

On which I pray, &c.

* The partition of Poland.

LETTER XCVI.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, October 9, 1772.

I HAVE received the new *diatribe* * of your majeſty, againſt the poor the moſt poor Poliſh Confederates, and their no leſs poor allies, if we ought to beſtow the mean epithet of *diatribe* on an excellent piece of poetry. For though thoſe who are the ſubject of this humorous poem may, by their ridiculous conduct, well merit ſuch an epithet, the humour itſelf is deſerving of one more worthy, from the wit, mirth, and levity with which it abounds. Permit me, however, ſire, to add, in the character of a good and honeſt Frenchman, that I ſhould have been better pleaſed not to have ſeen my dear countrymen partakers of this ridicule. I ſhall neither examine their deſerts nor the part they have acted, in the buſineſs. I am only ſorry that the end of the cudgel, which your majeſty has laid on the ſhoulders of the Poles, has reached the chevaliers by whom they have been aided. But, as I aſſume no part of

* The word here played upon beſt correſponds to the word oration taken in a colloquial ſenſe. T.

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their fame to myſelf, neither ſhall I accept of any of the raps which have been beſtowed on their knuckles: they may do as they pleaſe.

The circumſtance, ſire, which moſt delights me, at the concluſion of this charming poem, is the peace which is there foretold. For, mathematician as I am, though I pique myſelf in taking ſome pleaſure in good poetry, I take ſtill greater pleaſure to ſee men live in unity and peace. The letter your majeſty has done me the honour to write to me confirms this ſweet hope, and induces me to look forward to approaching peace. Yet it is here affirmed that the congreſs is broken up; but I believe the word of your majeſty to be truth itſelf, and hope that, if it be broken up, it will ſoon again be renewed; thanks to the period in your majeſty's pocket, of which you have been pleaſed to ſpeak, and which, if I am able to divine, ſhould be a period of great efficacy. Full of confidence, ſire, in this eloquent period, I have been in haſte to announce the news to my brother Encyclopediſts, who have this thing and this only in common with the church, that, like her, they hold blood in abhorrence.

Pleaſantry apart, this peace will crown your majeſty with glory, becauſe of the worthy and high part you have acted in it; and, though I confeſs

that additional glory to your majeſty is, according to the proverb, like carrying water to the ocean, ſtill the water is excellent that flows from ſo pure a ſource. To the title of hero will be added that of pacificator.

I am only vexed, and my Encyclopedic brethren participate my grief, to find that the *re-edification* of the *edificatory* temple of Jeruſalem cannot be included, as a ſecret article, in the treaty. Since nothing better can be done, the Jews muſt have patience, till they can ſettle on the banks of the Jordan. I hope the Turks will be beaten once more, in the firſt war they ſhall undertake againſt a philoſophic monarch in reality, and a Chriſtian king for form's ſake; and that this philoſophic hero, being no good Chriſtian, will render the Jews this ſmall ſervice; from which good intention he may even gain ſome ready money, for favours ought to be reciprocal *.

The profeſſor whom I have had the honour to ſend your majeſty, I imagine is now arrived at Berlin: I hope your majeſty has ſeen him, and I have no doubt he will, by his aſſiduity and conduct, fulfil all I have predicted.

* D'Alembert appears to have entertained hopes in favour of the Jews, who were ſeverely treated by Frederic, in Pomerelia, from hints thus given under the maſk of jocularity. T.

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I know not whether your majeſty be informed that M. Thiriot, who is here charged with your literary correſpondence, draws very near his end. Should your majeſty not have fixed on a ſucceſſor to his office, and ſhould you be pleaſed to confide in my choice, I take the liberty to recommend, on the ſame conditions, M. Suard, a man of underſtanding, taſte, and probity, who has long been ſucceſſively employed in the *Journal Etranger*, and the *Gazette Litteraire*, and who is the author of an excellent French tranſlation of Robertſon's Hiſtory of Charles V. I venture to aſſure your majeſty you cannot find a perſon who, in every reſpect, will be a better ſubſtitute to M. Thiriot, and I dare flatter myſelf you will the more readily believe me, becauſe of my known zeal in the intereſts of your majeſty, and of the experience you have already had, of the ſcrupulous attention I have continually paid to the ſelection of perſons, the choice of whom you have done me the honour to confide to me.

I am, with the moſt profound reſpect, the moſt lively gratitude, and the moſt ſincere admiration, &c.

LETTER XCVII.

From the King.

October 27, 1772.

I CONCEIVED how great was the raſhneſs of a German, who ſent French poetry to an academician at Paris; and, what is more, to one of the forty. I felt the impertinence of remitting, to one of the firſt of the French literati, a ſatire upon French adventurers. But, three or four perſons of merit excepted, the majority of theſe adventurers conſiſted of the dregs of the laſt reduction of your troops; and, as to my poetry, as it pretended to nothing higher than the ballad ſtyle, it appeared to me that a Teutonic bard, well ſtocked with effrontery, might venture its appearance.

The peace in which you intereſt yourſelf is making rapid progreſs; the congreſs has renewed the negociations, and before the cloſe of winter the troubles of the Eaſt will be calmed. I am but a feeble inſtrument, in the hands of Providence, co-operating to a ſalutary work. The pacific diſpoſitions of the empreſs of Ruſſia are all effectual, in this affair; the only honour which can revert to me is that I have ſupported the

the intereſts of the empreſs, by negociation, at Conſtantinople, and in other courts. Peace, no doubt, is the end which all politicians ought to endeavour to attain; but how vaſt are the combuſtibles diſperſed over the earth, and how many new conflagrations are to be feared! Not all the waters of the ocean will perhaps be ſufficient to extinguiſh them; even though all the Encyclopediſts were armed with buckets, and ſyringes, and were to conſume their lives in the rudeſt labours.

I ſhould willingly ſend ſome of the Hebrew vermin, of which I ſhould be glad to be rid, to the new temple of Jeruſalem, if good Mr. Muſtapha could be perſuaded to allow it to be rebuilt. But the ſultan is more embarraſſed by the difficulty of regaining Egypt, than by the affairs of Sion. Should ſome rich Jew of London, or Amſterdam, offer him a large ſum, and propoſe to rebuild the temple, I imagine the ſultan would grant his aſſent; but your wealthy Jews love their money better than their ſynagogue; and ſectaries diſcover ſo little zeal that they will not purchaſe thoſe privileges, at the vileſt price, for which they formerly cut each others' throats. The zealots of Europe are all confined to France. Amiens and Toulouſe have lately furniſhed examples. Spain becomes

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ice; Vienna daily grows lukewarm; and the Engliſh have even affirmed, in their newſpapers, that the pope is turned Calviniſt. I will not warrant the fact, but I have ſeen it in print.

Your profeſſor is arrived, and you muſt before this have received my thanks. His beginning is good, nor have I any doubt of the excellence of your choice.

And is poor Thiriot departing! Forty years have I known him, yet never ſaw him in my life. In his youth he was called the hawker of Voltaire. His decline has been evident; his letters are barren, and contain nothing either amuſing or poignant. Let the perſon you propoſe write me a ſpecimen, that I may judge of his manner, and let him be careful not to omit any of the anecdotes of Paris, if they are pleaſant; for good books become ſo rare that one in a year ſcarcely makes its appearance, though gaiety remains the characteriſtic of the nation.

What intelligence ſhall I ſend you from this place, except that one end of the empire of anarchy has been given me, to reduce to order? I am ſo embarraſſed that I could wiſh to recur to ſome Encyclopedic legiſlator, who might eſtabliſh laws in this country, which ſhould render the people all equal, beſtow underſtanding

on the fooliſh, eraſe intereſt and ambition from the heart of every citizen, and ſhould preſent only the phantom of a ſovereign, whom they might diſmiſs whenever they thought proper, and one who ſhould impoſe no taxes, but ſhould furniſh his own ſupplies. Such are the high ideas which at preſent employ my mind. Beautiful as ſuch a government might be, I deſpair of my want of capacity for eſtabliſhing it, according to the rules which your learned legiſlators (who never have governed) preſcribe. In fine, we muſt do as well as we can, and I muſt have credit given to me for my good intentions; like a ſcholar who is deſirous of teaching in the abſence of his maſters, and who, not well comprehending his rules, explains them erroneouſly.

Continue in good health, and take care of yourſelf, that I may again have the pleaſure of ſeeing you.

On which I pray, &c.

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LETTER XCVIII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, November 20, 1772.

I HAVE received the beautiful medal, which your majeſty has done me the honour to ſend, and the ſubject of which is the new provinces you have acquired. The legend, *Regno redintegrato*, proves that your majeſty but once more takes poſſeſſion of what anciently belonged to your houſe. If I do not miſtake, you are now maſter of a great part of the trade of the Baltic, and I congratulate this ſea, which, I believe, never before had a maſter ſo renowned. I hope it will be to her advantage, and to that of Europe likewiſe, as far as commerce is concerned; and I ardently wiſh that both may long continue to enjoy the glorious reign of your majeſty.

I ſtrongly ſuſpected that the pocket period, which you were pleaſed to mention in one of your laſt letters, would be efficacious in perſuading Muſtapha to peace; and, for the good of mankind, I rejoice that this ſo much wiſhed-for, and ſo neceſſary peace, is at length certain, and near, as your majeſty has given me to hope.

I tremble, and allow there is indeed much combuſtible matter, and ſome perhaps which is near enough to your ſtates; but I firmly confide that he who could ſo efficaciouſly throw water on the fire, which has been four years raging, will be fortunate enough to extinguiſh the ſmothered embers. Your majeſty will be better employed in the progreſs of education, which you have ſo ſucceſsfully attended to, than by engaging in foreign quarrels.

I hope you will be ſatisfied with the profeſſor I have done myſelf the honour to ſend you.

I imagine your majeſty will by this courier receive a literary letter from M. Suard, whom I propoſed as the ſucceſſor to poor Thiriot. The latter died a few days ſince, and I have reaſon to believe your majeſty will not be diſſatisfied with the intelligence ſent by M. Suard. He will conform, with equal zeal and intellect, to all your majeſty's wiſhes; and I take the liberty to renew my moſt humble prayers to your majeſty, and requeſt the ſame favours, in behalf of M. Suard, which you were pleaſed to beſtow on M. Thiriot. I wait your orders, and venture to hope they will be favourable.

I have ſent your majeſty's letter to the chevalier de Chatellux, who at preſent is not at Paris, and I have no doubt but he will immediately

return

return his moſt humble thanks to your majeſty. He is worthy of your bounty and eſteem, by his knowledge, character, deſire of information, and his military aſſiduity, which is not impeded by his other ſtudies. Unfortunately for the French nation, it is but too true that the ſame praiſe can only be beſtowed on a very ſmall number of his rank. The majority of our courtiers are more than indifferent to literature; they are its declared enemies; for they are convinced, in their hearts, that they are deſpiſed by men of underſtanding; though it muſt be owned that, in this, the men of underſtanding are very wrong. We continue to exiſt on our former literary fame; but exiſtence ſo precarious cannot long be ſupported, and we ſhall become the bye-word of Europe. This is a pity, for we were formed to be amiable!

Your majeſty then will not give, or at leaſt procure, by the intervention of Muſtapha, the Sorbonne, the ſmall mortification to ſee that temple rebuilt which, were it ſtanding, would cauſe them ſome embarraſſment.—Well, for the glory of our holy religion, which is become more intolerant and perſecuting than ever, I ſubmit! God be praiſed, I ſhall not long be a ſpectator of theſe evils! Almoſt continual watchings forebode an inflammatory propenſity, the

concluſion

concluſion of which will probably be that I ſhall take leave of this beſt of poſſible worlds. I ſhall without difficulty conſole myſelf, ſhould the Fates deign to add, to the precious days of your majeſty, thoſe days which they appear willing to retrench from the very uſeleſs, but moſt ſincere, moſt devoted, and moſt grateful of your admirers.

With theſe ſentiments I ſhall all my life remain, &c.

LETTER XCIX.

From the King.

December 4, 1772.

YOU do me and the Baltic too much honour, by intereſting yourſelf in our behalf. Notwithſtanding our union, I have no inclination to conſummate our marriage at the bottom of the ſea; nor, like the Doge of Venice, to commit myſelf often to its waves. Theſe are boiſterous latitudes, and the neighbourhood ſomething reſembles your Iroquois, who are at preſent ſubjected to the Engliſh. I know not what thoſe other barbarians who inhabit Byzantium will do; or whether my pocket period will make a greater impreſſion

impreſſion on them than the factious harangues of ſome of their pretended friends; who I believe wiſh to ſee them driven out of Europe, provided war and trouble might ſtill continue to vex the North. The Sorbonne would apparently look with a tranquil eye on that war; and, ſhould peace be concluded, the rebuilding of the temple of Jeruſalem will be as little thought of as the rebuilding of the tower of Babel. Amid theſe various contentions, the order of Jeſuits is to be entirely aboliſhed, and the Pope, after long heſitation, cedes at length, as he ſays, to the importunities of the eldeſt ſons of the church. I have received an ambaſſador from the general of the order, who preſſes me openly to declare myſelf its protector. My anſwer was that, when Louis XV. thought proper to diſband the regiment of Fitz-James, I did not believe it to be my duty to intercede for the corps; and that the Pope ought to be allowed to make what reform he thought proper, without the interference of heretics.

You continually complain of the little eſteem in which the French, at preſent, hold literature. To this many reaſons contribute. The nation, covetous of glory, protected the firſt great men who, after the revival of letters, by their writings, increaſed their country's luſtre, and ſome of whom

whom are not inferior to the moſt famous of the ancients. They afterward grew weary of this perfection; the ſucceſſors of theſe great men were not their equals; ſtudy was leſs profound, and every man undertook to write, and appear in print. Moſt of theſe authors, whoſe morals were a diſcredit to them, were incapable of gaining the public eſteem, and contempt was tranſferred from the perſon to the art. To theſe conſiderations be it added that Paris is an abyſs of debauchery, into which your headlong youth plunge: many there periſh, or loſe all deſire to be induſtrious. The conſequence is that, as men only delight in what promiſes ſucceſs, theſe frivolous youth are acquainted only with the groſs pleaſures of the ſenſes, and do not delight in the arts, of which they want ſufficient knowledge to judge; and it is more eaſy to deſpiſe what we do not underſtand than to confeſs our ignorance. What time has a man of faſhion at Paris, I will not ſay for ſtudy, but, for thought? Dreſſing, viſits, dining, the theatre, gaming, ſupper till two in the morning, miſtreſſes, and to bed! There they lie till eleven o'clock. Thus every moment is employed, and employed in doing nothing.

But I know not what I am about. It certainly is not for me to give you a deſcription of Paris,

with which you muſt be better acquainted than I am. The ſplendour of France, during the reign of Louis XIV, was too great to be long ſuſtained. There is a certain point of elevation, beyond which we cannot poſſibly riſe. The moſt intereſting ſubjects become exhauſted; we can only glean after thoſe who have reaped an ample harveſt; and, with equal genius, we muſt remain their inferiors; becauſe the ſucceſs of a work depends greatly on the judicious choice of a ſubject. I am at preſent diſguſted with the trifling literary correſpondence which I have maintained with France; but it is with the want of materials, and not with the writers themſelves. When Fontenelle, Voltaire, Mairan, Crebillon, and even the author of Vert-Vert (Greſſet) wrote, it was a pleaſure to hear from France, for it was news from Parnaſſus. The works of theſe authors were worthy of being univerſally read; but, at preſent, nothing but compilations appear, or collections of the twenty-three thouſand ſix hundred and thirty-three great men, and eight thouſand five hundred and ſixty-five illuſtrious women, whom France has produced.

Nor can your journals keep up their ſpirit, but exiſt by extracts. Who, for example, would ſtudy the new art of adminiſtering clyſters; or

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the modern mode of handling the raſor, dedicated to Louis XV. to teach him to ſhave himſelf; or the Dictionaries, and Encyclopedies, of every kind, which appear? Theſe things excite my diſguſt; and, as I have no correſpondent at Athens, now it is become Setines, neither do I wiſh to have one at Paris, now that the merchandize in which I take pleaſure is no longer to be procured. But this does not diſturb my reſt, and I would have you remember that ſleep and hope are the two opiates which Nature has deigned to grant humanity, to enable it to endure actual evil. Sleep therefore and hope, and all will be well. Live for the mortification of thoſe who envy you; and the good done to your enemies will be greater, by your exiſtence, than all the pleaſure they will derive from your death. Recollect that Paris does not contain the whole world; and that, if in your own country your worth be not known, more juſtice is done you elſewhere.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER C.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, January 1, 1772.

PENETRATED as I am, by thoſe tender and reſpectful ſentiments which your majeſty knows I have long entertained for your perſon, let me requeſt permiſſion to begin my letter nearly as Demoſthenes begins his oration *for the crown*. I firſt petition all the gods and goddeſſes to preſerve, during the coming year as during the preceding, a monarch ſo dear to philoſophy, and to me, inſignificant as I am, in particular. I further pray that the ſame gods, if it be true that the hearts of kings be in their hands, will be pleaſed to continue the favour of this great and worthy monarch, ſuch as he has hitherto done me the honour to confer it; and of which I hope, by the warmth of my gratitude, my attachment, and my admiration, I am not wholly unworthy.

This admiration, ſire, would if poſſible be increaſed, by reading the charming letter which your majeſty has written to M. de Voltaire. As he is acquainted with my friendſhip for him, and with all that I feel for your majeſty, he ſuppoſes he has been guilty of no indiſcretion in ſending

ſending me a copy of that letter, which I have given him a promiſe not to tranſcribe, but which I wiſh all men of letters to hear, that they may be ſenſible how much they are indebted to you. The eſteem you teſtify for their chief merits their whole gratitude, and the manner in which you expreſs this eſteem is full of thoſe graces and charms which breathe through all your majeſty's letters. The paſſage on the Turks, beaten although they have no philoſophers, is peculiarly pleaſing; as is that on the lyre of the Henriade, of Amphion, of the dolphin that bore him, and particularly that in which your majeſty adds—*It is ſo much the worſe for the dolphins* * *if they do not love great men.*—This ſaying is worthy of becoming proverbial, among men of letters. It ſhall henceforth be the burthen of my ſong; ſeeing literature oppreſſed and perſecuted as I do.

The poor children of Loyola muſt be very ill indeed, to apply to a phyſician like your majeſty, who in fact ſcarcely can have any efficacious remedy to adminiſter. I ſuſpect they are not ſatisfied with your majeſty's anſwer, and that

* The letter here alluded to is number CCCLXIV. of the correſpondence between the King and Voltaire; dated Potſdam, December 4, 1772. The word *dauphin* in the French language equally ſignifies a dolphin or the heir-apparent, and the pun is conſequently loſt, if loſs it be, in the tranſlation. T.

they will not do you the honour to make you a brother of the order, as they did our Louis XIV. who might have been ſatisfied without this dignity, and the wretched James II. of England, who was better formed to be a Jeſuit than a ſovereign. I do not imagine the king of Spain, who warmly preſſes the deſtruction of this brood, will diſcover much edification in the embaſſy ſent to your majeſty, to put themſelves under your majeſty's ſpecial protection. Nor can I doubt but, when he ſhall learn this jeſuitical artifice, which procured them ſo excellent an ironical anſwer on the part of your majeſty, he will redouble his efforts with our holy father for their aboliſhment, and our deliverance. I know indeed that, when the order ſhall be annihilated, philoſophy and literature will derive no great advantage, in moſt parts of Europe. Still we ſhall have a neſt of caterpillars the leſs; and caterpillars too that were exceedingly prolific, and deſtructive.

The judgment of your majeſty on the poem of Helvetius, in your letter to M. de Voltaire, is like all your other judgments, exceedingly juſt and preciſe. I, like your majeſty, am perſuaded the author would have corrected his poem before publication, had he lived long enough to preſent it to the world. But is not your majeſty

delighted with the preface, which has been added? It appears to be full of taſte, philoſophy, and feeling, and to be exceedingly well written. Our prieſts are not ſatisfied with it, which is an additional mark of merit.

Your majeſty no longer wiſhes to have a literary correſpondent. I confeſs our literature is on the decline; that our thiſtles are numerous, our flowers ſoon out of bloom, and our fruits few. For our conſolation, however, it appears to me that other nations are in no better a ſtate; and that, if we are on the decay, we ſtill keep the moſt diſtinguiſhed place. I fear we ſhall not long preſerve this advantage, and that other nations, whoſe taſte our writers have contributed to form, and to increaſe their knowledge, will ſoon be our victors; like a boy who beats his nurſe, when ſhe has no more milk to give. I weep in ſilence over the fate with which our literature is threatened, and my only conſolation is to recollect that there is ſtill a philoſophic hero, in the north, who knows the value of ſcience, who loves and protects letters, and who is at once the chief and the model of men of literature.

I am, with the moſt profound reſpect, &c.

LETTER CI.

From the King.

January 8, 1773.

INSTEAD of the gods to whom Demoſthenes addreſſed himſelf, I ſhall implore the laws of motion, thoſe vivifying principles of all nature, the effects of which you have ſo learnedly calculated, to prolong while poſſible their activity in you, that you may many years continue to inſtruct your cotemporaries, and we who are of the ignorant, and have not the honour to be mathematicians. I wiſh at the ſame time that Fortune, a goddeſs to whom you do not often ſacrifice, would ſhed her happy influence over your lengthened life; for without happineſs life is but a load, and often a load that is inſupportable. If you aſk me what I mean by Fortune, I anſwer whatever you pleaſe; Deſtiny; the Fates; Neceſſity; Predeſtination; any thing that can render you happy. Such are my wiſhes, not for the new year only, but for numbers of ſucceeding years.

I was flattered by your approbation of my opinion, concerning the patriarch of Ferney. Enlightened poſterity will envy France this phenomenon

nomenon of literature, and blame the nation for not having ſufficiently known his worth. Men of ſuch genius appear but ſeldom. Grecian antiquity afforded one Homer, the father of epic poetry; one Ariſtotle, who, though occaſionally clouded and obſcure, poſſeſſed univerſal knowledge; and one Epicurus, to whom to do juſtice a commentator like Newton was neceſſary. The Romans have furniſhed us with one Cicero, whoſe eloquence equalled that of Demoſthenes, and whoſe erudition was vaſt; and one Virgil, whom I regard as the greateſt of poets. A prodigious gap ſucceeded, till the age of Bayle, Leibnitz, Newton, and Voltaire. For an infinite number of wits and men of talents have lived, who cannot be ranked among this firſt claſs. Nature perhaps is obliged to make efforts, to bring forth genius ſo ſublime; perhaps many are ſtifled by the accidents of birth, and the ſports of fortune, which turn them from their proper path; and perhaps ſome years are as barren, in the production of mind, as others are in the production of corn, wine, and oil. France, as you ſay, ſhews tokens of this ſterility; talents are there diſcovered, but not much genius; and, though her neighbours perceive the dearth, they themſelves are but little better provided. England and Italy are

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in a languiſhing ſtate. Hume and Metaſtaſio muſt not be compared either with lord Bolingbroke or even with Arioſto; and we Germans have twenty dialects, but no fixed language: this eſſential inſtrument being wanting, the cultivation of letters is injured. A taſte for ſound criticiſm is not yet become ſufficiently familiar to us. I endeavour to correct the ſchools, in the eſſential part of the belles-lettres; but perhaps I am among the one-eyed, who point out the road to the blind.

We do not want experimental philoſophers, nor mechanics; but we have not yet acquired a taſte for mathematics. In vain do I tell my countrymen Leibnitz ought to have ſucceſſors; none are to be found. When men of genius ariſe, theſe diſcoveries will all be made; and this chance I think ſuperior to your calculation. We muſt leave Nature, who is free in her operations, freely to act; we poor creatures can neither forward nor prevent her efforts, when ſhe ſhall be diſpoſed to make them, for the production of thoſe highly deſirable beings. We ſtill have men of learning; yet would you believe that I am obliged to encourage the ſtudy of the Greek language, which, were it not for my cares, would be entirely loſt?

From this faithful ſketch, you will judge that your

your country has no reaſon yet to fear it ſhall be ſurpaſſed by other nations. I thank Heaven that I came into the world in good time. I have ſeen the remains of an age which will ever be memorable, in the annals of the human mind. The fall of the leaf is come; but the next generation will even be worſe than the preſent. It appears the decline will continue, till ſome ſuperior genius ſhall ariſe, awaken the world from its ſlumbers, and reſtore that ſtimulus which inſpires a love for all that is eſtimable, and uſeful to the human race.

In the mean time, let us enjoy the preſent, without diſturbing ourſelves concerning the paſt, or the future. Look with the eye of a ſtoick on whatever can give you pain, and eagerly ſeize all that gives pleaſure. Reflect as long as we will, to this we muſt come. I wiſh with all my heart agreeable objects may be predominant with you, or that you would delude yourſelf; for, in deſpite of reaſon, it is better to be happy with error than unhappy with truth.

On which I pray, &c.

LET.

LETTER CII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, Good-Friday, April 9, 1773.

THE public papers have ſo frequently ſpoken of the great occupations of your majeſty that, from motives of reſpect for your time, I have feared leſt I ſhould importune you with my philoſophic or literary trifling. Not that I have not continually thought of the great prince who, after having ſo long been the hero of the north, ſeems at preſent to have become both hero and arbitrator. But, however much intereſted in your majeſty's glory, I earneſtly deſire, for your repoſe and preſervation, you ſhould be the arbitrator only, and that no circumſtances may force you, once again, to diſplay the warrior. We are ſo much threatened with this ſcourge, of war, that I who, in the language of the mouſe of La Fontaine, I thank God, pique myſelf on my courage, am half dead with fear; not for myſelf, whom bullets will not ſo eaſily reach, but for your majeſty, who however has more to apprehend from fatigue than from the foe, if any foes you have. The philoſopher Fontenelle, during the troubles occaſioned by the ſyſtem of

Law, went one day to the levee of the Regent, who loved him, and ſaid,—"Permit me to aſk "your grace, with all humility, whether you "hope to free yourſelf from your difficulties." I ſhall not put the ſame queſtion to your majeſty, for you have freed yourſelf from difficulties much greater. I ſhall only take the liberty to pray God to bleſs you, if you maintain peace; and, if you are obliged to go to war, to pray that he may preſerve you.

Were I to judge of your majeſty's occupations by the philoſophic and intelligent letter which you have done me the honour to write to me, I ſhould imagine you wholly addicted to literature, and the fine arts. For who could ſuſpect that ſubjects on which you ſpeak ſo well, and with ſuch minute depth, were nothing more than your recreation; and the recreation too of a few moments ſtolen from affairs of the utmoſt importance? Your majeſty muſt ever be admired, but this admiration will ever be accompanied with pain in me, while I have any fears for your ſafety. Look with compaſſion on philoſophy and letters, that cry to your majeſty as David does to the Lord in his pſalms—*O my God, I truſt in thee; let me not be aſhamed; let not mine enemies triumph over me.*

The ſaid poor philoſophy has been hotly alarmed

alarmed this winter. We feared we ſhould have loſt the patriarch of Ferney, who has been ſeriouſly ill, and for whoſe damnation pious ſouls have offered up the moſt pathetic prayers. He is better, and I hope he ſtill may, as he himſelf ſays, *labour in the Lord's vineyard.* Literature and the nation would ſuffer an irreparable and an immenſe loſs, by his death; which would be additionally cruel, under the preſent circumſtances, for our poor literature is more than ever abandoned to bears and baboons. Your majeſty cannot imagine the deteſtable inquiſition which is exerciſed over all works, and the intolerable mutilations which thoſe undergo that are ſuppoſed capable of publiſhing ſome uſeful truths. This rigor ſeems to me ill imagined; for thoſe who, from complaiſance and a deſire of peace, would have ſubmitted to be half caſtrated, perceiving they muſt be wholly, determine to take nothing away, but deliver themſelves up to Mark Michael Rey, or to Gabriel Cramer *, ſuch as God made them, with all their virility. I know not whether it be the cuſtom in Pruſſia, as in France, to give cats to be ſpayed by tinkers; but here men of letters are treated like cats, and

* Bookſellers famous for publiſhing works freely written, on philoſophical, political, or religious ſubjects. T.

are

are delivered up to be mutilated by the tinkers of literature. Notwithſtanding the little pleaſure your majeſty takes in geometry, did my poor head permit me, I ſhould wholly confine myſelf to that ſtudy. The calculation of integrals, and the preceſſion of the equinoxes, have nothing to fear from tinkers.

Obliged to renounce this peaceable but fatiguing ſtudy, I amuſe myſelf in writing the hiſtory of the French Academy, of which I have the honour to be ſecretary; and, for my misfortune, am obliged to ſpeak of a crowd of academicians, whoſe abilities did not ſurpaſs mediocrity, and who have died ſince the commencement of this century. I know not whether the work will ever be finiſhed, and ſtill leſs whether it will appear during my life. Did all the perſons I have to mention reſemble your majeſty, the writer would then be ſupported by his ſubject; but when I recollect that, on one hand, I have bad authors to diſſect, and, on the other, fooliſh cenſors to ſatisfy, my pen at every moment is ready to drop from my hand. May your majeſty continue to hold yours, as you hold your ſword; and may you eſpecially continue to honour me with your bounty, of which I flatter myſelf I am not wholly unworthy, from the

the tender and profound veneration with which I am, &c.

LETTER CIII.

From the King.

April 27, 1773.

BETWEEN you, to whom I write, and the clerks of the poſt-office, who open packets, I divide my letter. To thoſe clerks I ſend two pieces in verſe, at which perhaps they may take offence, though this troubles me little, and which may amuſe the Encyclopediſts, a thing that will give me pleaſure. From theſe verſes, which perhaps are not ſo critically exact as to endure the reviſion of Vaugelas, or d'Olivet, you will perceive that our Teutonic tinkers do not ſpay the cats that determine to think; and as, God be thanked, we have no Sorbonne, nor bigots poſſeſſed of ſufficient authority to dare to interfere, and cenſure our thoughts, you will diſcover that I and the Pruſſians think aloud. Yet I muſt not conceal from you that the perpetual ſecretary of our academy has thought proper to print I know not what confeſſion, of an infidel

infidel who, as might be expected, was converted in his dying moments, by the fear of the devil, from his debaucheries. This induced me to addreſs the epiſtle here added to you; nor was any thing wanting for ſuch materials, but a better poet.

You ſee, my dear D'Alembert, that, while I thus fool away time, I am not much overloaded with the burthen of Europe, which you imagine I bear. How could you ſuppoſe that a king of the ancient Obotrites ſhould emancipate himſelf ſo far as to become one of the actors of Europe? I am but a beggarly politician, who am ſatisfied with keeping my little corner to myſelf, and defending it againſt the cupidity and envy of the great powers. I own I have taken upon me to endeavour to re-eſtabliſh peace, in Europe; but the money of the Gauls has prevailed, at Conſtantinople, with the Ulemats, againſt reaſons more weighty than gold; though I can aſſure you that the rhodomontade tales of your countrymen, and the pretended motions which the newswriters ſay they will make, in the north, are the ſubjects of ridicule, alike at Berlin, Peterſburg, and Copenhagen. We remain exceedingly pacific, no man thinks of whetting his knife here, and thoſe who thoughtleſsly ſhould ſhoulder us would find to whom they are talking. Take

the half of what I have written to yourſelf, and cede the reſt to thoſe who, no doubt, admiring my beautiful ſtyle, are deſirous of inſpecting it clandeſtinely. They may publiſh this like other letters, which they have diſperſed wherever they thought proper; and, if it ſhould not ſatisfy them, I have leiſure enough to write one which they would not publiſh.

Without further ſpeech of ſuch knaves, who weary me, I aſſure you I greatly intereſt myſelf in the preſervation of Voltaire. He is the only man of great genius the age has produced. He is old it is true, but there ſtill are fine remains. He recals to mind the age of Louis XIV, which ours is far behind. His manners are polite, and he poſſeſſes thoſe captivating qualities in which the pretended wits of this age are deficient. He has fixed his abode on the confines of a republic, and writes freely; ſtill obſerving that decorum which I think every writer ought to obſerve, leſt neceſſary freedom ſhould degenerate into cynical inſolence.

I think you are to be pitied, for being at preſent obliged to tread in the ſteps of Fontenelle, and to tranſmit the high deeds of your academicians to poſterity. Fontenelle had ſometimes to ſpeak of academicians who were ridiculous enough; but at others of great men. The mix-

ture

ture pleaſed and excited the curioſity of the reader; whereas you will neither have great diſcoveries to publiſh nor great talents to praiſe; and, being occupied in writing the lives of men of mediocrity, no one will be eager to know what you have to ſay. The deficiency is in the ſubject, and not in yourſelf; the difference is however great.

Who would not with avidity read the life of Newton, of Peter the Great, or of Caſſini? But who would make any enquiries into the notable acts and feats of the abbé Coyer, of Marmontel, of De la Harpe, and people of their ſpecies? Believe me, all depends on the time in which we live. Alexander the Great, born in Macedon at preſent, would be no better than a ruffian; and were your Louis XIV the grandſon of Louis XV, he would begin his reign by a general bankruptcy, which would not greatly conduce to his celebrity. To poſſeſs talents is not ſufficient; means for their exertion are neceſſary. Had the great Condé been a capuchin friar his name would never have been known in Europe; and had Voltaire been born a peaſant, in Burgundy, he would never have written the Henriade. Were Cæſar now to come into the world he would perhaps become one of the *monſignori*, who dance attendance in the anti-

chamber of the cordelier Ganganelli, &c.—This *is for the clerks of the poſt-office; and, ſhould they think proper, they may print it for the edification of the faithful.*

You ſee I neglect none of my correſpondents, but that theſe gentlemen have their part in my letter. Since they have been impertinent enough to open ſome of my packets, it is but right I ſhould addreſs them perſonally; them, and their no leſs inſolent ſuperiors, at the inſtigation of whom they act.

Grimm is to viſit Berlin; he accompanies the hereditary prince of Darmſtadt; I hope to hear of you when he arrives. In the mean time, you may be wholly at your eaſe reſpecting me. While recommending you to the protection of Urania and Minerva, I offer up a thouſand prayers for your proſperity.

On which, &c.

LETTER CIV.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, May 14, 1773.

FROM the two pieces which your majeſty has done me the honour to ſend me, it is evident you ſtand in no fear of Teutonic tinkers, as we in

in France fear the Gallic tinkers; for certainly, in theſe two charming pieces, the cat does not, according to the proverb, preſent a velvet paw*. This fearleſs Teutonic cat does not ſhun the ſacred knife of the Druids of Gaul; but the cat is at the head of one hundred and fifty thouſand maſtiffs, that will not ſuffer the paring of claws, nor caſtrations of a more precious kind from his writings. In proof of this, among a thouſand others, ſire, I only aſk the two pieces you have ſent, which are full of wit, reaſon, and philoſophy as ſound as it is eloquent. The lines are excellent! I humbly thank your majeſty for having thought me worthy to have truths ſo uſeful, and ſo happily expreſſed, addreſſed to me. I was particularly enchanted, as a good mathematician ought to be, at the eſtimate of three hundred and thirty crowns paid inſtead of one thouſand; and I like your majeſty think, ſhould our Druids be ſubjected to a ſimilar deduction, it would be the beſt means of diſguſting them with the follies which they retail.

The epiſtle to the marquis D'Argens, or rather to his ghoſt, is eaſy, fanciful, and poetic; and Philoſophy, which is obliged elſewhere to hold Truth captive, is a fine wax-candle† in-

* *Patte de velours:* ſaid of a cat that does not ſcratch. T.

† Alluding to the wax-candles that are offered at catholic altars. T.

debted to Providence, for enjoying a ſupport like your majeſty, in the hero of the age, and for being able to expreſs herſelf with ſuch force, freedom, and dignity, under the ſhade of your throne, and the protection of your arms. Nor has ſhe leſs obligation to your majeſty, for the aſſurances you give her that the north, and conſequently Europe, will remain at peace. She would leſs be afraid of war, ſire, if Druids only were the combatants. While they ſhould be deſtroying each other ſhe would recover breath. But, among the various tricks which theſe Druids have played the human race, they have found the ſecret of abſenting themſelves from the field of battle. They certainly are ſo dear to mankind that they cannot be too carefully preſerved. However, ſire, it is at leaſt ſome conſolation for philoſophy, to know that the poor multitude will remain ſatisfied with being deceived by the Druids. They have proclaimed a truce to cutting of throats. May God and Frederic preſerve them in this good diſpoſition!

Thank Heaven and you, ſire, I therefore ſhall have no melancholy thoughts to trouble me, while I *mix up* the hiſtory of the French academy. I uſe the phraſe *mix up* becauſe I regard this hiſtory as a kind of doſe, which the

ſecretary

ſecretary is obliged both to prepare and ſwallow. I will however endeavour to gild the pill, to the beſt of my ability, for my own ſake, and for the ſake of thoſe who ſhall chew it after me. I will do like Simonides, who, finding nothing to ſay in praiſe of I know not what Olympic prize-fighter, began an eulogium on Caſtor and Pollux.

What your majeſty ſays concerning our literature is very true. Voltaire, though feebly, ſtill ſupports its honour; but he leaves his followers far in the rear. As your majeſty remarks, much muſt be attributed to circumſtances. We are ſated with perfection, and re-production is difficult; not to mention that literary inquiſition, which is more than ever atrocious, ſhackles all minds. Your majeſty has no idea of the general enmity of hypocrites, and fanatics, to unfortunate philoſophy. Seeing their houſe every where on fire, they hurl the flaming brands at paſſengers. The lower rank of writers are all at their command, and in pamphlets, dictionaries, and ſermons, religion is the inceſſant cry. Moſt of them are men of licentious morals, and ſome of them thieves. But, no matter; our holy mother church employs all ſhe can meet in her defence; and philoſophy, ſeeing

this army of Cartouchians * commanded by prieſts, drawn up in battle array, may well addreſs the Deity like Joad—

Voila donc quels vengeurs s'arment pour ta querelle †.

This will be no great misfortune, ſo long as it ſhall pleaſe the Supreme Being, who hitherto has protected philoſophy amid ſuch multitudes of banditti, to preſerve your majeſty, whoſe name, renown, arguments, and poetry, are ſo eſſential to the good cauſe.

I know not whether poſt-office clerks open letters. I ſcarcely can believe ſuch an inſult to public faith can any where be committed. But, be it ſuppoſed that they have taken copies of your majeſty's two epiſtles, and remitted them to the grand almoner, I ſuſpect this diſcreet Flamen will not circulate them among the devotees of the court of Verſailles. For my own part, ſire, I ſhall only communicate them to ſome of the elect, who, while reading them, will pray for their chief, their protector, and their example. I anticipate the petitions they will offer up for your majeſty's precious health, and add to theſe my own, with that tender

* From Cartouche a famous robber. T.

† Behold what avengers arm in thy cauſe!

veneration

veneration with which your bounties ſo long have inſpired my heart: and in theſe ſentiments I ſhall all my life, &c.

LETTER CV.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, May 17, 1773.

M. DE GUIBERT, colonel of the Corſican legion, who will have the honour to preſent this letter to your majeſty, is the author of the Eſſay on Tactics, which work I, an unworthy philoſopher, took the liberty laſt year to ſend, from its author, to the illuſtrious founder of modern tactics, and which this great maſter ſeemed to honour with his approbation. The author, after having depoſited his military productions at the feet of the hero of our age, has wiſhed perſonally to kneel to the greateſt prince of Europe, to be the ſpectator of the ſublime qualities of Frederic the Great, and to be able to ſay *I have ſeen him!* I dare aſſure your majeſty that M. de Guibert is every way worthy of paying you homage, by the profound veneration he has for you, by the extent and variety of his knowledge, by the deſire he has to increaſe that knowledge

knowledge from the ſuperior intelligence of your majeſty, and in fine, by the poſſeſſion of virtues which your majeſty prefers to genius itſelf; by candour, moral ſimplicity, and the worth and dignity of his mind.

Though he makes, as is his duty, the ſtudy of his profeſſion his particular and deareſt occupation, he has applied thoſe moments which he could ſteal from this ſtudy to letters, and philoſophy, with the utmoſt ſucceſs. He comes in ſearch of the model and arbitrator of all thoſe talents which nature uſually diſtributes among various great men, and he is worthy, ſire, to admire in you the general, the writer, the monarch, and the philoſopher. After having ſubmitted his military eſſays to your majeſty's inſpection, he would venture, did he not fear intruding upon time ſo precious, to make you the judge of eſſays of a different kind, but in which your majeſty's leſſons would be equally inſtructive. He has written a tragedy, the ſubject of which is the Conſtable Bourbon; and he would think himſelf highly flattered, ſhould the author of the poem on the Art of War be pleaſed to hear it read. It is not, ſire, for a humble and timid mathematician to anticipate your majeſty's judgment, on this tragedy; but I own I have been much deceived in the pleaſure it has given me,

me, ſhould not thoſe great and virtuous ſentiments with which it abounds acquire M. de Guibert the eſteem, and favour, of your majeſty.

One of the moſt flattering marks of bounty your majeſty can beſtow on him will be to permit him to be a ſpectator of thoſe learned manœuvres which render the Pruſſians ſo formidable, and ſo famous. I have read, I know not where, that an officer of the army of Darius, ſome years after the battle of Arbela, repaired to the court of Alexander, and requeſted that great prince would ſuffer him to ſee the Macedonian troops manœuvre that had taught his maſter repentance; and that the victor at Arbela made the officer of Darius * ſuch an anſwer as Alexander *the Great* ought to have made—"*Come, and ſee.*" The officer, after having admired the beautiful and grand machine, taking leave of the monarch, ſaid—"I have ſeen the "ſprings and wheels; but the art of ſetting "them in motion is a ſecret known only to ge-"nius. Here only ſhall I find him to whom "Nature has imparted this ſecret; and, unfor-"tunately for the king of Perſia, my maſter, "he cannot obtain him for a general."

I ought not to forget to inform your majeſty

* M. D'Alembert related an anecdote from memory, and did not trouble himſelf concerning ſtrict accuracy. Darius died the year after the battle of Arbela. T.

that

that M. de Guibert, while coming to Pruſſia to admire and to be informed, is particularly deſirous that every minute trace of reproach, which a phraſe in his book merited from your majeſty, may be effaced. He declares all Europe renders juſtice to the generally acknowledged valour of the Pruſſian troops; and, were he to think otherwiſe, his ſhame would be the greater becauſe of its ſingularity. Yet he will venture to tell your majeſty, were he even in danger of contradiction, that it is his opinion the ſucceſs of theſe brave troops is leſs due to their courage than to the ſuperior talents by which it has been directed. He will even venture to add, once again perhaps at the riſk of your diſpleaſure, he is perſuaded our poor Gauls, however wretched their appearance at Roſbach, would have been victors, had they only exchanged generals with the Pruſſians. Mathematics, ſire, which underſtands nothing of the manœuvres of war, but which is well acquainted with calculation, will be free enough to wager on the ſide of M. de Guibert. After having won, as ſhe flatters herſelf ſhe ſhould, ſhe would repeat to thoſe generals the ſaying of Louis XIV, to the duke de Vendome, the victor at Villa Vicioſa—"We "had only one man too many for them."

I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER CVI.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, July 30, 1773.

M. DE GUIBERT is penetrated with gratitude, by the bounty with which he has been received by your majeſty. This bounty will, if poſſible, increaſe the ſentiments he ſo long has felt for your perſon, and will in his eyes crown thoſe virtues and talents he ſo much admires. I warmly participate in the gratitude of M. de Guibert, however perſuaded I may be that, ſince your majeſty has ſeen him, he is in no farther need of recommendation. Yet is he far from being as well ſatisfied with himſelf as your majeſty appears to be with him, which does but add to his merit. "Though this hero (thus "he writes to me) received me with kind-"neſs ſufficient to have inſpired me with cou-"rage, I could not, when I ſaw him, ſhake off "an agitation which would not ſuffer me to "reply, as I wiſhed, to the queſtions he was "pleaſed to aſk. A kind of magic cloud came "over my eyes. This is, I imagine, what is "called the glory, round the heads of our calen-"dar ſaints, and the radiance of a great man."

I am perſuaded that your majeſty, when you ſhall again ſee M. de Guibert, will be confirmed in the good opinion you have conceived of him, and which I was very certain you would conceive. I am very deſirous to know your majeſty's thoughts, concerning his tragedy; and I own I ſhall be greatly deceived if you do not liſten to the work with pleaſure, and with eſteem for the author.

I wait with ſtill greater impatience to hear of your majeſty's health, which appears to ſtrengthen by your increaſing ſucceſs and fame. I have no doubt but you will ſoon crown this immortal glory, by beſtowing on Ruſſia and Poland, and on the Turks themſelves, Turks though they are, that peace of which they have ſo much need, and which it was not your fault that they did not ſooner enjoy. Your majeſty will then add to the title of hero, which you ſo long have merited, that of pacificator, which you will obtain, in deſpite of the efforts of envy to deprive you of this honour.

The pleaſantry of the laſt letter your majeſty was pleaſed to write to me is a precious proof of your health, which is ſo dear to me and multitudes. When I feel myſelf tempted to quarrel with Nature, for having given me ſo frail and gloomy a habitation, I pardon her by recollecting

lecting that ſhe preſerves your majeſty; and in a whiſper to myſelf, exclaim—"Silence! Be con-"tented; the hero is in good health!" May you, ſire, long write ſuch verſes as thoſe you have had the goodneſs to ſend me, even though the impertinently curious, that have incited your majeſty's anger, ſhould think them ſo excellent as to take copies! Nor can I think theſe inſolent people, though they themſelves may reſemble M. von Haren, and like him vaunt they have no imagination, are ſuch blockheads as not to admire the imagination ſo evident in this poetry. Your majeſty never can beſtow that eulogium on your verſes which the Dutch poet did on his, nor ſay of your works, like one Hardion, a ſtupid tutor to very reſpectable princeſſes, when ſpeaking of ſome wretched performance of his own—*You will find no wit in it.* The poor man was more literally true than he imagined, and one might have been tempted to have anſwered him—*Of that I am convinced*—were there not danger that, by the ſuperabundant heat of his imagination, he might have underſtood ſuch an anſwer as a compliment.'

I know not where this letter will find your majeſty, yet I hope it will come to hand before the return of M. de Guibert, that your majeſty may, if poſſible, repreſs that radiance which will but excite agitation anew, at his next audi-

ence. I envy him the happineſs he will have, even though I myſelf, at again ſeeing your majeſty, ſhould be equally agitated. True it is, my feelings would be greatly tempered by a ſofter ſenſation, by gratitude, and that tender veneration with which I am penetrated for your majeſty.

With feelings like theſe, I ſhall, to the end of life, &c.

LETTER CVII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, September 27, 1773.

I DO not fear abuſing the bounty with which your majeſty honours me, by taking the liberty occaſionally to requeſt you would beſtow the like favours, on perſons worthy to be introduced to you. Of the number of theſe is the comte de Crillon, a colonel in the ſervice of France, who will have the honour to preſent this letter to your majeſty. The admiration and reverence with which he is penetrated for great men, and the high value he ſets on the happineſs of approaching them, make him deſirous of rendering his reſpectful homage to Frederic the Great; not to ſatisfy a vain curioſity,

ſity, but to liſten, gain inſtruction, and derive knowledge from that ſource to which all Europe repairs for information. The honourable name he bears, a name dear to all worthy and noble minds, would be a ſufficient recommendation to the hero whoſe kindneſs he hopes to obtain; but to this eſtimable name the comte de Crillon adds other merits, which are perſonal, and ſuch as are better calculated to gain the approbation of a philoſophic monarch. His knowledge is uncommon, for a perſon of his age. His love for the ſciences, literature, and ſtudy, is ardent. He has a profound contempt for the trifles which occupy, and ſo greatly degrade, moſt of the higher order of French nobility. His manners are polite, his ſimplicity of morals finds few equals, in people of his rank; and to his candour and virtues are added a juſt, prudent, and cultivated mind.

Such, ſire, is the comte de Crillon, who I have no doubt will be received as graciouſly as he hopes to be, will be permitted to pay his court to you, during his abode in Pruſſia, and will juſtify all I have written. Your majeſty will perceive in him a deſcendant worthy of his illuſtrious anceſtors, and deſtined to tread in their ſteps. Henry IV. beſtowed the epithet of brave, on one of the Crillons, and this is become, as it

were, his proper name. I hope your majeſty, when acquainted with the gentleman I have the honour to mention, will call him the ſage and virtuous Crillon. Such epithets will be inferior to none; eſpecially if beſtowed by you.

The comte de Crillon might perhaps enumerate other titles to reſpect, derived from his family, in which courageous and virtuous actions are hereditary. His father, the duke de Crillon, it was who commanded ſeventeen companies of French grenadiers, at the bridge of Weiſſenfells, whoſe valour merited the praiſes of your majeſty. The duke de Crillon perſonally deſerved, on this occaſion, the gratitude of all who intereſt themſelves in the preſervation of great men, by an action worthy of his anceſtors. He had placed two officers in a ſmall iſland, who obſerved your army, while the bridge was burning. One of the two, to whom it had been recommended to remain concealed, came from his hiding place to inform the duke that, if he pleaſed, he could kill a general, whom he believed to be the king of Pruſſia, from the reſpect which was paid him by the officers. This the duke forbade, but he knew not that he was preparing an honour for his ſon, which he now hopes to receive, of beholding the greateſt king in Europe, and perhaps

perhaps the happineſs of meeting a favourable reception.

M. de Guibert, penetrated with admiration for all which you have permitted him to ſee, and eſpecially for what he has ſeen in your majeſty, informs me in his letter that he ſhall, during life, preſerve the moſt lively gratitude for the kindneſs with which you have deigned to receive him, and the ſignal favours you have been pleaſed to beſtow. The comte de Crillon ventures to flatter himſelf he ſhall meet with equal favour. After having admired the great chief of the Pruſſian army, he is deſirous of ſeeing and admiring this celebrated army itſelf, which is indebted to your majeſty for all its worth, and which under your command has acquired immortal fame. This is a kindneſs I requeſt your majeſty to grant, as I before did for M. de Guibert; and I will pledge myſelf for an equal return of gratitude.

The firſt wiſh of my heart, on their return, is that M. de Guibert and the comte de Crillon ſhould bring me ſuch news as I expect, and hope, and ſuch as will be ſatisfactory to the tender and profound intereſt I take in your preſervation, happineſs, and renown. This will conſole and encourage philoſophy, which, in the various obſtacles it has to encounter, has

more than ever need of your majeſty, who, by your writings and knowledge, are become its chief, its ſupport, and its example.

I am, with the moſt profound reſpect, &c.

LETTER CVIII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, December 10, 1773.

ABOVE two months ſince, I had the honour to write a letter to your majeſty, which I expected you would long ſince have received, and the bearer of which was the comte de Crillon, a young French officer of great merit. This he hoped he ſhould have preſented to your majeſty in the month of October, but unforeſeen circumſtances have retarded his arrival. I expect he will now ſoon be at Berlin, and I previouſly take the liberty to requeſt a favourable reception from your majeſty, for this young gentleman, whoſe name, talents, and virtues, conſtitute his worth.

The unforeſeen delay of the arrival of that letter has been the reaſon why I have not, for ſome months, written to your majeſty; not being

ing willing too often to intrude, occupied as you are, by great and little affairs. Among the latter, I rank the trick your majeſty has played the cordelier, Ganganelli, by receiving his pretorian band, the Jeſuits, whom he has had the folly to diſmiſs. I know not whether this little trick will not breed a quarrel in Paradiſe, and I fear leſt Francis of Aſſiſe and Ignatius Loyola ſhould come to fiſty-cuffs, like the heroes of Scarron's comic romance. I very ſeriouſly hope, however, that neither your majeſty nor your ſucceſſors will have cauſe to repent, of the aſylum you have granted theſe caballers; that they will be more faithful, in future, than they were during the laſt war of Sileſia, as your majeſty did me the honour yourſelf to inform me; and that, by their worthy and ſage conduct, they will no longer merit the epithet of malevolent vermin, which your majeſty beſtowed on them, four or five years ago, in one of the letters you did me the honour to write to me.

I ſhould be glad, at preſent, to aſk the Jeſuits what they think of philoſophy, and toleration, againſt which they have been ſo violent? What would have become of them, when their order was in the agonies of death, had not Europe poſſeſſed a philoſophic and tolerant ſovereign? I laughed heartily at the excellent letter

of your majeſty, to the abbé Colombini; and, among the reſt, at the juſtice you did the good fathers, by affirming you knew not men who could, in every reſpect, better merit the title of *prieſts*. This reminds me of a certain very incredulous philoſopher, in whoſe preſence the company turned to ridicule I know not what proof, of what Voltaire calls * * *. "You are "very difficult," replied the philoſopher; "for "my part, I am acquainted with no better *proofs* "than theſe." Nor was my laughter leſs at the paſſage in which your majeſty adds that, being in the heretical claſs, the holy father could not grant you any diſpenſation for a breach of promiſe. Yet cannot I forbear owning to your majeſty that, while laughing, philoſophy felt a momentary alarm, to ſee ſuch tares preſerved. Fortunately ſhe ſoon recovered from her fears, by conſidering that the ſerpent at preſent is without a head, which the apothecary Ganganelli himſelf has cut away; and that, by means of this amputation, the body may ſupply a moſt excellent and medicinal viper broth, by which your majeſty no doubt will profit.—Therefore, ſo be it.

The marquis de Puyſegur is not at Paris, but I have written to inform him of your majeſty's remarks. I know not what anſwer he can make,

to

to the well founded objection of your majeſty, on the pretended difference between ancient and modern ſoldiers. Unworthy as I am to judge on ſuch ſubjects, I cannot but think that the ſoldiers even of the cordelier would become the ſoldiers of Paulus Emilius, were a Frederic at their head; and that our ſuperſtitious reverence for antiquity is not better founded, when we ſuppoſe the ancients ſuperior to the moderns, in ſtrength of body, than it is when we ſuppoſe them ſuperior in talents and genius.

M. de Guibert has returned full of gratitude, for the kindneſs with which he has been honoured by your majeſty. He ſpeaks in raptures of your perſon, and of all he has ſeen. He has but one regret, and this is a great one. He has been unable to profit by the advice your majeſty might have given him, concerning his tragedy; for he rather expected advice than praiſe. On his paſſage, he viſited the patriarch of Ferney, who like me has laughed heartily at the expence of the pope, and the trifling perplexity into which he has been thrown by your majeſty; for, an honeſt pope as he is, he ought to excommunicate the Jeſuits, ſhould they obey you; and ſhould he excommunicate them Philoſophy hopes to ſee fine diverſion. Your majeſty perhaps remembers a certain battle fought in Para-

guay, by the king-jeſuit Nicholas, in which the field-marſhal had three capuchins killed under him *. I have told the philoſopher of Ferney that your majeſty, when raiſing this new regiment, ſcarcely could avoid recruiting for capuchins, to remount the corps. I only requeſt your majeſty would deprive theſe new ſoldiers of carabines; for of this diſeaſe it is ſaid the king of Portugal fell ill.

As there is no fear your majeſty ſhould ever make a Jeſuit your confeſſor, your general, your prime-miniſter, or your miſtreſs, I think Philoſophy may be wholly at her eaſe, concerning the uſe to which your majeſty will put theſe good people; for you will render them of utility by diſabling them from being dangerous. Such is the reſult of my reflexions, after having indulged in momentary mirth at their expence, and at ſeeing them diſperſed by and ſcourged with the cord of St. Francis.

It is not many days ſince I have been informed of the excellent inſcription, which you have put up in the catholic church of Berlin, and

* *Tués ſous lui.* Whether there be any jocular anecdote alluded to, or any quibble, is more than can be known from the text; but D'Alembert means to deſcribe the Jeſuit-general aſtride on theſe capuchins who were killed under him like horſes. T.

which

which is truly admirable, truly precious, to philoſophy, and truly worthy of your majeſty——. FREDERIC, *qui ne hait pas ceux qui ſervent Dieu autrement que lui* *. This is one of the greateſt and moſt uſeful leſſons your majeſty ever afforded to your brother kings, of the preſent or of a future age; a leſſon by which they will certainly one day profit, whether from a principle of juſtice or of vanity, that they may in ſome manner reſemble the hero of the preſent century. This is an inſcription that well deſerves to be preſerved by a medal; the figures and legend for which no perſon can better imagine than your majeſty.

Let me requeſt your majeſty to accept my moſt humble congratulations, on the birth of the prince who is added to your auguſt houſe; the perpetuation and extent of which is always a moſt intereſting object to me; and of this, I dare believe, your majeſty is well perſuaded.

One of the moſt eſtimable members of your academy, M. Bitaubé, has ſent me the poem of WILLIAM, of which he is the author. I think the work intereſting; the reading of it gave me pleaſure. The author is deſirous of rendering it more perfect, in the ſecond edition, and has

* Frederic, who hates not thoſe who worſhip God in a manner different from himſelf.

acquainted

acquainted me with the wiſh, which he has ſignified to your majeſty, of making a tour to France, that he may profit by the advice of our principal men of letters. I imagine, ſire, the work might be greatly benefited; and perhaps a new edition which he has undertaken of his tranſlation of the Iliad ſtill more ſo. His deſire to impart all poſſible perfection to the work is increaſed, becauſe it has been dedicated to, and has had the good fortune to pleaſe, your majeſty. The enterpriſe is ſo difficult that he dares not confide wholly in himſelf. By attempting to give a more faithful tranſlation, he fears leſt he ſhould injure a work that has met with applauſe; and, that he may avoid this rock, he thinks it neceſſary to conſult the true judges of the language. Such, ſire, are the motives that make him deſirous to undertake this journey, though he is the reverſe of being in love with a wandering life; and he ventures to flatter himſelf your majeſty will cede to theſe reaſons.

May that deſtiny which watches over great men preſerve your majeſty, during the enſuing year, and thoſe which ſhall ſucceed! May you, by pacifying the north, be crowned with ſucceſs, and perfect glory! Such are the prayers of one who will ever remain, with the moſt lively gratitude, the tendereſt veneration, &c.

LET-

LETTER CIX.

From the King.

December 16, 1773.

THE comte de Crillon has delivered me your Crillonade, from which I have learned the hiſtory of all the Crillons of the diſtrict of Avignon. He makes no ſtay here, but continues his journey to Ruſſia, ſo that I muſt take him at your word, and ſuppoſe him the moſt ſage of the Crillons; well perſuaded that you have fathomed and calculated all his curves, as well as his angles of incidence. He will meet with Diderot and Grimm in Ruſſia; both full of the favourable reception granted them by the empreſs, and the admirable things they have ſeen. Grimm it is ſaid will remain in that country, which will become the aſylum of the Encyclopediſts and men like Chaumeix.

A dialogue of the dead has appeared here, the interlocutors of which are the Virgin Mary and Madame la Pompadour. It is attributed to various authors. If you have no copy, I will ſend you one; however, I am prevented from venturing to remit ſuch a packet, becauſe of the fear of offending your letter-viſitors, or your illuſtrious poſt-office clerks.

M. de Guibert has paſſed by Ferney, where it is affirmed he has been converted by Voltaire; that is to ſay, he has renounced the errors of ambition, and has abjured the dreadful trade of mercenary executioner, to become a capuchin, or a philoſopher; inſomuch that he has already publiſhed a declaration, like Greſſet, informing the public that, having had the misfortune to write a work on tactics, he is a penitent from the bottom of his heart, and proteſts he will never give rules for murder, aſſaſſination, ſpoil, ſtratagem, and like abominations. For my own part, as my converſion is not far advanced, I beg you circumſtantially to relate that of Guibert, that my heart may be mollified, and I may have ſome bowels of compaſſion.

The landgravine of Darmſtadt is here, on her return from Peterſburg, where ſhe has married her daughter, and is unwearied in her praiſes of the empreſs, and of the excellent inſtitutions of that ſovereign, in Ruſſia. You ſee what it is to travel! We who live like rats, in our holes, can only hear of theſe things; and the ſenſe of hearing is very inferior to that of ſeeing. In the mean time, I ſhall offer up prayers for the ſage Anaxagoras to Urania, and ſay—"It is for thee to ſupport the firſt of thy

"apoſtles,

"apoſtles, and keep that light ſhining, deprived "of which a great kingdom would fall into "darkneſs." To the great Demiourgos I ſhall add,—"Mayeſt thou always take the good "D'Alembert into thy holy keeping!"

LETTER CX.

From the King.

January 7, 1774.

YOU need entertain no fears for my perſon. There is nothing to apprehend from the Jeſuits. The cordelier, Ganganelli, has pared their nails, drawn their eye-teeth, and diſabled them from ſcratching and biting; but they may become ſchool-maſters, of which they are more capable than the whole brood of the Cuculati. I own they were guilty of tergiverſations, during the laſt war; but reflect on the nature of clemency, which admirable virtue cannot be exerciſed, till we have firſt been offended. You philoſophers will certainly not reproach me, for having treated men mercifully, and exerciſed humanity, indifferently toward all thoſe of my own ſpecies, be their religion or country what they may. Believe me, we ought to practiſe philoſophy,

loſophy, and trouble ourſelves leſs concerning metaphyſics. Good actions are more advantageous to the public than the moſt ſubtle ſyſtems, or the moſt acute diſcoveries, in which the mind is generally loſt, and the truth remains undiſcovered. I am not however the only perſon who has admitted the Jeſuits. The Engliſh and the empreſs of Ruſſia have done the ſame, and London is of the party. So much for the Jeſuits.

I imagined M. de Guibert had abjured his inhuman art, in preſence of Voltaire. I had not time to hear his tragedy. He told me he intended to make a tour to the north next year, that he would paſs this way, and would then read his piece to me. I can only admire, and not criticiſe, thoſe who are more learned than myſelf. Some rhymes written for my amuſement, in a foreign language, ought not to render me preſumptuous enough to make me ſuppoſe myſelf a maſter of the art of poetry. The compoſition of tragedy has to me appeared particularly difficult. I have not had courage enough to make any attempt of this kind, in which mediocrity is inſufferable; and ſucceſs could not be expected, unleſs the mind was more free from buſineſs, and interruption, than mine can be.

I have

I have read the work of Helvetius, and for his ſake am ſorry it has been printed. His book is deſtitute of logic, and contains nothing but paralogiſms, reaſoning in a circle, paradoxes, and complete abſurdities, at the head of which the project of a French republic muſt be placed. Helvetius was a worthy man, but he ought not to talk of what he does not underſtand. Bayle would have ſent him to ſchool, to ſtudy the rudiments of logic. Yet he was one of our philoſophers! Yes; one of thoſe whom Lucian has ridiculed. The ſterility of our poor age, in great men and good works, is terrible. Nothing but the lees of what did honour to the human mind, in the time of Louis XIV, remain; and they will ſoon diſappear *.

Diderot is at Peterſburg, where the empreſs has heaped favours upon him; yet however it is ſaid the Ruſſians think him a tireſome reaſoner, who is continually reiterating the ſame

* I have, though frequently with much difficulty I own, abſtained from combating any of the erroneous opinions which (among many that are true and eſſential to human happineſs) I have to my great affliction been obliged to tranſlate: but, leſt young minds ſhould be miſled, I cannot in this place forbear obſerving, as a general remark, that, when the king cenſures the efforts that were made by Helvetius, and the beſt and greateſt writers of France, in favour of liberty, it is generally with infinite injuſtice. T.

things.

things. Intrepid though I am as a reader, I cannot read any of his works through. There is a tone of ſelf-ſufficiency, and arrogance in them, at which my inſtinctive liberty revolts. Ariſtotle, Cicero, Lucretius, Locke, Gaſſendi, Bayle, and Newton did not write thus. Modeſty is always pleaſing, and is the firſt merit of the ſage. He ſhould reaſon forcibly, but ſhould not imperiouſly decide. This is the conſequence of being dogmatical. To ſpeak with ſelf-ſufficiency it is ſuppoſed is to convince. The manner may be good in declamation, but is inſupportable to a reader. With the book in hand, we judge of the reaſons and laugh at the emphaſis. In vain will the author aſſume falſe conſequence; his arguments are appreciated, and reduced to their juſt value.

I perceive my letter is very long; I am aſhamed of it, and I aſk pardon. I ſhall add only a word; my beſt wiſhes for the preſervation and proſperity of Anaxagoras for a long ſucceſſion of years.

On which I pray that Nature, and the Spirit which preſides over the great whole, may take you into their holy keeping.

P. S. Your Crillon is gone to hawk his wares in Ruſſia; we have heard nothing of him for this month paſt.

LET-

LETTER CXI.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, February 14, 1774.

I RESEMBLE the teacher of philoſophy of the *Bourgeois Gentilhomme* of Moliere: I, like this great philoſopher, have read the learned treatiſe of Seneca on anger, and I grant, referring to the Jeſuits, of whom your majeſty is become the general, were there no culprits there could be no clemency. It is beſide affirmed that the Jeſuits of Poland have, by their fidelity, repaired the wrong formerly done to your majeſty by the Jeſuits of Sileſia. Nor can your majeſty do better than to reſemble the Deity, who it is ſaid wiſhes not the death of the ſinner, that would ſave himſelf by ſincere repentance. I really believe they are very repentant; that is, they are very much vexed; eſpecially as your majeſty, having the honour and the happineſs to be a heretic, will not, as you well obſerve, permit them to be otherwiſe than uſeful, and never dangerous, as they have been, more than once, to princes who went to hear maſs, and to confeſſion.

Your majeſty has no high opinion of Diderot, and I will not venture to contradict you. Yet,

ſhould he paſs through Berlin, I hope your majeſty will permit him to approach your perſon. I dare affirm you will judge more favourably of the man than of his works; and that, with a fruitful imagination and much knowledge, you will diſcover in him mild ardour, and great amenity.

I allow, with your majeſty, that there are many falſe and hazarded opinions, many things to be retrenched, and much prolixity, in the work of Helvetius. It may better be ſaid to contain materials than to be a work; and many of the materials ought not to be employed. Still I cannot but think there are ſome uſeful and well-explained truths in it; and it would beſide acquire additional value, in my eyes, were it only for the juſtice which it renders to your majeſty.

I grant our age is very inferior to the age of Louis XIV, in taſte and genius; but, if I do not miſtake, it is ſuperior in knowledge, the horror in which ſuperſtition and fanaticiſm are held, and the love of uſeful ſcience; which things in my opinion have their merits.

M. de Guibert has not abjured his trade to Voltaire, leſſons of which he has been taught by the works and in the provinces of your majeſty. He hopes your majeſty will permit him

again

again to return and admire, when circumſtances ſhall be favourable, and allow him to receive advice from you, concerning his tragedy; a work proper to be judged by princes like yourſelf.

I have no doubt of all the fine things which Diderot and Grimm write of the Semiramis of the north. Yet it ſeems to me that theſe Ruſſians, who, as I had the honour to inform your majeſty ſome time ago, were the food of horſes at Spa, begin at preſent to be the food of Janiſſaries. If your majeſty ſhould not interfere, and drive both Turks and Ruſſians home, I doubt that at length neither Turks nor Ruſſians will be to be found; which would be a great pity. I recollect, after the battle of Zorndorff, at which your majeſty diſpatched thirty thouſand Ruſſians, a fat Dane very coolly told me—"There was no harm done; it was ſo eaſy for "God to make Ruſſians."

I very much wiſh to read the dialogue your majeſty has been pleaſed to mention, one of the interlocutors of which is the bleſſed Virgin Mary. Perhaps you might find ſome opportunity of ſending it me, without ſuffering it to paſs the inſpection of theſe Cerberean curs.

The comte de Crillon is worthy the favour and eſteem of your majeſty, by his ardour to

gain information, his virtues, and the reſpect in which he holds great men. Such are the ſentiments you inſpire, with which I ſhall all my life, with the moſt lively gratitude, &c.

LETTER CXII.

From the King.

March 11, 1774.

YOU may be perfectly pacified, reſpecting the Jeſuits, who are no longer Jeſuits, in Pruſſia. They are more neceſſary than you ſuppoſe, in France, for the education of youth, in a country in which teachers are ſcarce, and in which they would with difficulty be found among the laymen, eſpecially in Weſt Pruſſia. I am very glad to hear you are of my opinion, that clemency can only be exerciſed by offence having been firſt given.

I am very much aſtoniſhed at the remedies employed by the king of Sardinia for his flux*, and imagine it to be an invented tale. I have had the gout, of which I have cured myſelf by regimen, without invoking St. Anthony of Pa-

* *Fluxions.* Perhaps the dyſentery; perhaps a diſorder in the eyes. T.

dua.

dua. A man who has employed remedies like thoſe which it is ſaid the king of * * * has taken, certainly is not formed for the ſociety of M. D'Alembert and La Grange. Our academy has ſo little to loſe that it is our duty to preſerve the good members we have, and not to part with them.

We are informed by letter that Diderot and Grimm are ſoon to leave Peterſburg. They intend to paſs through Warſaw, before they come hither. I imagine they may arrive about the beginning of April, and I certainly ſhall ſee them on their paſſage, and write to you concerning Diderot, when I have converſed with him, with all that ſincerity which you know me to poſſeſs. I could have wiſhed, for the honour of Helvetius, he could have conſulted ſome of his friends, previous to the publication of his work. It ſeems to me he formed a ſyſtem, while writing his book on the Underſtanding, which he wiſhed to maintain in his laſt work, and which has been productive of thoſe errors which ſyſtematic works eaſily occaſion. All endeavours to impart the character of truth to paradox are ineffectual. When Grimm paſſes this way, I ſhall ſee whether he will take charge of the dialogue, in which the Virgin Mary acts ſo conſpicuous a part. I am afraid, when you read it, you will exclaim—"Is this

" all!" It can only afford a moment's amuſement.

A new pamphlet, by Voltaire, has appeared here, intitled *Le Taureau Blanc**, written with all the pleaſantry and vivacity of youth. The concluſion is edificatory. The bull becomes a man, and even a monarch. Whenever he repairs the follies of which he has been guilty, the people aſſemble round his palace, and cry—" Long live our great king, who is no more a " bull!"—If you have not the work at Paris, it may be ſent you by the ſame channel.

I expect the unconverted De Guibert, who as well as his tragedy will be well received; nor do I doubt but the work, of which ſome people have ſpoken to me, is worthy of approbation.

The comte de Crillon has had his noſe frozen at Peterſburg, but by the aid of ſnow it has fortunately been ſaved. He is to return this way in the ſpring, taking his route through Lapland, Sweden, and Denmark. He and the prince of Salm may both happen to arrive all ice; but we will take every care in thawing them, and if poſſible will reſtore them to their natural ſtate. I, whoſe temperament is not froſty, and who eſteem you with great warmth, offer up my

* The White Bull.

prayers

prayers that the great Demiourgos may protect Anaxagoras.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER CXIII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, April 25, 1774.

I HAVE no fear that the *heretofore ſelf-ſaid Jeſuits*, as they were called by the late parliament of Paris, ſhould by their re-eſtabliſhment endanger your majeſty. For what ill could they do the monarch whom the Auſtrians, Imperialiſts, French, and Swedes, united, could not diſpoſſeſs of a ſingle village? But I dread leſt other princes, who are not equally able to oppoſe all Europe, and who have weeded this hemlock out of their gardens, ſhould one day take a fancy to borrow a little ſeed, again to propagate the plant. My deſire is that your majeſty ſhould, by an edict, prohibit the exportation of Jeſuit-ſeed, which never can come to good, except in Pruſſia.

I know not whether M. de Guibert has been forbidden to tranſport his body to the North, but I am informed he will not have the honour

this year of paying his court to your majeſty, as he deſired and hoped. His ardent wiſh was again to ſee the admirable manœuvres of your troops, again to contemplate the Deity that gives motion to the grand machine, and to ſubmit his tragedy of the Conſtable Bourbon to the judgment of the monarch, who combines the genius of Apollo and of Mars.

The comte de Crillon will be more fortunate. He will once more viſit your majeſty, and bring you intelligence of thoſe Ruſſians who ought to make peace, and thoſe Swedes who will do well not to make war: and, what infinitely more intereſts me, he will bring me news from your majeſty, and will again, on my behalf, pay that homage of reſpect, gratitude, and admiration, which I owe. I once more take the liberty to recommend the comte de Crillon to your majeſty's favour, and venture to repeat that the more you know him the more you will think him worthy to be diſtinguiſhed from that herd of young French nobility, which has ſo juſtly given you an ill opinion of the reſt.

I am informed that Diderot is at the Hague. The *maladie du pays** haſtened his return to

* *La maladie du pays* is a proverbial expreſſion, that ſignifies much the ſame as *ſick of the mother*. T.

France.

France. I much wiſh your majeſty could have ſeen and paſſed judgment on him, for I am perſuaded he would have pleaſed you, by the mild ardour of his converſation, and the urbanity of his character.

I am charged to preſent a requeſt to your majeſty, in behalf of a young man of the greateſt merit, named Villoiſon, whoſe profound knowledge has cauſed him to be received a member of the Academy of Belles Lettres, at Paris, before the age of twenty. He is at this age what Grotius, Petau, and Scaliger were at fifty; but with more taſte and underſtanding. He will be exceedingly flattered, ſhould he obtain the rank of foreign aſſociate in the academy, which is rendered ſo flouriſhing by your majeſty's protection. He has lately publiſhed a work on Homer, which all the learned regard as a miraculous effort of knowledge and labour, and which he would take the liberty to preſent to your majeſty, did he not fear that the Greek, with the ſtrange characters of which it is every where disfigured, ſhould make your majeſty ſtart back at opening the book. I venture to aſſure your majeſty that the name of this uncommon young man will not diſhonour your academical liſt; and I requeſt this favour in behalf of M. de Villoiſon.

I know not whether I have done myſelf the honour

honour to mention the poem of WILLIAM to your majeſty, which appears to me to be intereſting and well written. The author is deſirous of rendering it more perfect, by the aid of men of letters in France, who may be of great uſe to him, and he conſequently wiſhes to make a journey to Paris. I am perſuaded this journey will be very advantageous to M. Bitaubé, that his poem will profit greatly by it, as will the other works he intends to publiſh, and that he will collect literary wealth, in this city, which he will turn to excellent account, in his academical labours.

I impatiently expect the edificatory dialogue of the Virgin Mary, whom, as your majeſty knows, I have ever held in the greateſt devotion.

I have read the *Taureau Blanc*, which your majeſty has been pleaſed to mention, and which has excited much laughter. The king who is no longer a bull, the prophets metamorphoſed into magpies which ſpeak better after the change, and a thouſand other ſallies of humour, are inconceivable from a man of eighty, and who has written the Henriade and Alzire. We muſt exclaim with Terence, *Homo homini quid præſtat!* What difference between man and man! This proverb is more applicable to your majeſty than any perſon. Men, who like me are in the common claſs, cannot hope to riſe ſuperior to this

this claſs; not even by paying you homage, for that is a ſentiment which they do but partake in common with the reſt of their unfortunate and petty ſpecies. It is ſome conſolation that they may find their equals, even amongſt thoſe whoſe creſts are higheſt. The devotion of a certain Italian prince to St. Anthony of Padua, which I have had the honour to mention to your majeſty, is very true; unfortunately for this prince it is indeed too true. The academy of Berlin is happy enough to have attained M. de la Grange, and finds no want of St. Anthony of Padua.

Your majeſty no doubt has been informed that M. de la Grange has again, for the fifth or ſixth time, for I have loſt my reckoning, gained the prize of our Academy of Sciences, at Paris. I cannot too often congratulate myſelf for having procured the academy of Berlin a man of ſuch eminent and uncommon talents; and who is even of greater eſtimation, for the modeſty and mildneſs of his character, than for his knowledge and genius.

I always too late perceive I abuſe the precious time of your majeſty, and I conclude by renewing my moſt humble aſſurances of the profound veneration, and inviolable attachment, with which I am, &c.

LETTER CXIV.

From the King.

May 15, 1774.

"CAN gall ſo great poſſeſs a ſage's heart!" the poor Jeſuits would exclaim, did they know the contents of your letter. While they were powerful, I did not protect them; and in their downfal I only conſidered them as men of letters, whoſe equals, for the education of youth, it would be difficult to find. This great object renders them neceſſary to me; becauſe, of all the catholic clergy of the country, they alone have applied themſelves to letters: for which reaſon, let who will aſk, he ſhall have no Jeſuit from me, I being intereſted in keeping them to myſelf.

Since I wrote to you, a vaſt encyclopedic phenomenon, deſcribing an ellipſis, has ſcorched the edge of our horizon. The rays of his light have not reached us. The aſtronomers of Stettin have obſerved and calculated his motion, the direction of which was toward Hamburg. He has been ſeen by the ſtar-gazers of the Hague, whence his benign influence has been ſhed on the Dutch bookſellers. Pompey was fortunate enough

enough to ſee and hear Poſidonius, though the philoſopher had the gout. For my part, I have neither heard nor ſeen the great Diderot, though he was in full health. But every man is not allowed to viſit Athens; and that encyclopedic neceſſity, which determines the fate of men, apparently, has not ſmiled on me, becauſe I protect the Jeſuits.

Your brave Crillon, after having exhibited himſelf in Ruſſia, Finland, Lapland, Sweden, and Denmark, arrived at Berlin. I imagine he muſt well warm himſelf, before he can thaw all the congealed air which he has inhaled on the road. He travels in company with a prince of Salm, who is very amiable, and has met the approbation of all the courts at which he has appeared. Your * * † may have very admirable occult qualities, but he is thought ſomewhat dull, and yawners only can find amuſement in his ſociety. I do not ſpeak for myſelf, for judgment cannot be paſſed by having been once in a man's company; it is the opinion of the public, of which I am but the echo.

I ſhall wait with intrepidity for M. de Guibert,

† The affected lenity of omitting the name of the count, in this place, after inſerting it ſo often, is ſtrange. The good opinion of him whoſe penetration is unequal to the diſcovery is ſcarcely worth acquiring, or preſerving. T.

and

and his tragedy, as long as Heaven ſhall grant me life, pre-diſpoſed to applaud both, with all the ejaculations of admiration that can be exhaled from a Teutonic ſoul. You know father Bouhours has told us that our form is moſt heavily encumbered with matter. Our groſs fibres muſt be well ſhaken, before they can vibrate; and, when they do, it is not with a twentieth part of the ſtrength, the tranſport, the ecſtaſy, and the convulſions, which are felt by the ſoul of a French petit-maitre. His blood is the ſparkling champaigne, his nerves are more fine than a ſpider's web, and his ſenſorium is put in motion with as much eaſe as a weather-cock by the breath of zephyr. To ſuch judgments ſhould the beautiful, the elegant, and the perfect, be preſented; and not to half-animated lumps of clay.

Our academy muſt not come under this deſcription. It is compoſed of foreigners, who have a right to think, and may have ſome modeſt pretenſions to underſtanding. Your M. de la Grange ſhines in a very admirable manner, by *a* plus *b*, which to me is as totally unintelligible as it is to the king of * * *†. I know not whe-

† In this, as in the former inſtance, it is impoſſible to conjecture why the name of the king of Sardinia ſhould be twice omitted, after having been inſerted. T.

ther

ther the latter, at preſent, addicts himſelf to tranſcendent and myſtic devotion; but while duke of Savoy, he had no ſuch thoughts. I am ſorry for him, but that is all I can do; for exceſſive devotion and delirium are, in my opinion, ſynonymous: except indeed that devotion may be the worſt; for that remains, and the delirium diſappears with the fever.

But, to return to our academy, I have no doubt but the new member you mention will with pleaſure be accepted. He ſhall be propoſed to the academicians, provided with your recommendation; and, were they to refuſe him, it would be with as ill a grace as Charles XII. would have rejected an officer, furniſhed with the approbation of the great Condé. This is all you will at preſent receive from a valetudinarian, who, while life ſhall remain, will intereſt himſelf in the fortune and proſperity of the modern Anaxagoras.

On which I pray, &c.

LET-

LETTER CXV.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, July 1, 1774.

THE laſt letter your majeſty did me the honour to write, you were on the eve of departure for your reviews, which I now ſuppoſe are ended, and your majeſty is returned to your philoſophic retreat, into which for a moment I ſhall obtrude, to renew my profound reſpect, and lively gratitude.

A great event has happened among us, ſince the laſt letter I had the honour to write to your majeſty, of great conſequences from which, political, civil, moral, literary, philoſophic, and eſpecially œconomical, we are in expectation. Much is promiſed, and much is wanted. This event is the inoculation of the king and the royal family, which a month ſince we were far from hoping, and which proves that the voice of reaſon is heard. This at once affords us happy proſpects and good example. Heaven preſerve us from wars, fanatics, and knaves, and all will do well!

I do not think France will ever ſend to aſk Jeſuits from your majeſty. I very much pity

catholic Germany, that it ſhould poſſeſs no better perſons, for the inſtruction of youth, than thoſe ignorant caballers. Your majeſty does not do me juſtice, if you imagine I have any gall in my heart againſt them. On the contrary, no voice was heard louder than mine, exclaiming againſt the barbarity with which ſome individuals among them were treated, in France. But it is my wiſh that, while rendering individual Jeſuits as happy as they can be in retirement, the means ſhould never be ſupplied them to revive in a body; eſpecially in a country where ſuch revival muſt be dangerous, and where they never were any thing but dangerous. Were each ſovereign a Frederic, I ſhould behold Europe paved with Jeſuits, without apprehenſion, or care. But Frederics paſs away, and Jeſuits remain.

I am ſorry that the encyclopedic phenomenon, which your majeſty has done me the honour to mention, has only grazed the horizon of Berlin. I am perſuaded, had your majeſty obſerved it at a leſs diſtance, you would have found it worthy ſome attention. My earneſt exhortation was that it ſhould ſuffer itſelf to be ſeen, by the greateſt aſtronomer of our age; and I affirmed that the lens of this aſtronomer were very benignant, though very exact. It was in awe of the aſtronomer, and I am ſorry; for I am con-

vinced the aſtronomer would not have been diſſatisfied with his obſervations, and that he would have done me the honour to have ſaid—" I find " all that you told me of the encyclopedic phe- " nomenon true."

Young Crillon is not ſo great a phenomenon, but I dare aſſure your majeſty he has his worth; and I could have very much deſired your majeſty ſhould have judged for yourſelf. If the Ruſſians thought him dull, ſo much the worſe for them that they were Ruſſians. I wiſh it were proper for me to impart the contents of a letter, which he has written to me, to your majeſty, and in which he has given a detail of all he obſerved in your ſtates. Not that I would anſwer the Ruſſians ſhould be as well ſatisfied with this letter; for he certainly does not think or ſpeak of them as he does of your majeſty.

Your majeſty will neither liſten to M. de Guibert nor to his tragedy this year; and it appears to me, from the manner in which you have been pleaſed to mention him, that you will wait with great reſignation for both. I thought you did not ſeem diſſatisfied with this gentleman, at leaſt perſonally; and I imagined your majeſty would think as favourably of his piece. I perceive with a kind of affliction that, for ſome time paſt, your majeſty has been but little favourable

vourable to the French nation. I allow that, in many reſpects, the diſgrace is not unmerited; and no perſon ſees more clearly than I do the atrocities, and abſurdities, of every kind, which diſhonour my dear country. But God ſaid he would pardon Sodom, could only ten juſt men be found in it; and I do not think France is yet reduced to this degree of indigence, and dearth. Though father Bouhours may have ſaid a fooliſh thing, this may well be pardoned: we take as little pleaſure as your majeſty, in the deciſions and writings of father Bouhours.

M. de Villoiſon commiſſions me to lay his profound reſpect, and lively gratitude, at your majeſty's feet. He, like me, impatiently waits the new honour your majeſty is pleaſed to confer on him, in admitting him of your academy.

I am, with every ſentiment of reſpect, gratitude, and admiration, which will end only with life, &c.

LETTER CXVI.

From the King.

July 28, 1774.

YOU have well divined; I have been returned theſe three weeks from my peregrinations, and have enjoyed the pleaſure of the company of the dutcheſs of Brunſwick, to whom I have cauſed the Duc de Foix and Mithridate to be read, by Aufrene*. I was informed, before my departure, of the death of Louis XV. by which I was ſincerely affected. He was a good prince, and a worthy man; his only defect was that he was placed at the head of a nation the ſovereign of which ought to poſſeſs more activity than he had received from nature. If ſome errors were committed, during his reign, they muſt rather be attributed to his miniſters, than to himſelf. At preſent, public malevolence is unbridled, againſt this good prince. Let the reſtleſſneſs of the French beware, leſt it ſhould bring on them the puniſhment of the frogs in the fable. This however is not what they have to

* *A laquelle j'ai fait entendre le Duc de Foix et Mithridates, déclamés par Aufrène.* Perhaps, and moſt probably, Aufrene played the two characters. T.

fear.

fear. Miracles are related of Louis XVI. The whole empire of the Gauls is chanting his praiſe. The ſecret to find approbation in France is novelty. Weary of Louis XIV. the nation was prone to inſult his funeral obſequies; and Louis XV. in like manner, has lived too long. The duke of Burgundy acquired a good character, becauſe he died before he aſcended the throne; as did the late dauphin, for the ſame reaſon. To ſatisfy the French, they ought to have a new king once in two years. Novelty is the goddeſs of your nation; and, be the ſovereign as good as he will, the Gauls will endeavour to diſcover his defects, and abſurdities; as if a king were not a man!

"What man is without error; and what king "without foibles?" Were I M. de Sartines, I ſhould paſte up this ſentence in all public places, and at the corner of every ſtreet. The princes who were our predeceſſors, we ourſelves, and thoſe who ſhall ſucceed us, are imperfect; each is a mixture of good and ill qualities. None but your Lord's vicegerent, ſeated on the city of the Seven Hills, is infallible; and ſo ſuppoſed to be by thoſe of robuſt faith. For my part, whoſe faith is frail and ſlight of make, like the duke de Nivernois, when I contemplate a tyrant, a barbarian, and an inceſtuous hypocrite,

like Alexander VI. I find it difficult to acknowledge his infallibility; and I rank your porters of Paradiſe on a level with other men, and a hundred degrees below philoſophers.

Reflections like theſe, drawn from a knowledge of the human heart, are productive of indulgence, and of that ſupport which men mutually owe each other, and which leads toward toleration. For theſe reaſons, your enemies, the Jeſuits, are tolerated by me. They have made no uſe of their daggers, in the provinces where I afford them protection; but have confined themſelves to their colleges, in which they have taught the belles lettres. And is this a reaſon for perſecution? Shall I be accuſed for not having exterminated a ſociety of men of letters, becauſe ſome individuals of that ſociety have been guilty of crimes, at the diſtance of two hundred leagues from my kingdom? The laws condemn the guilty to puniſhment; but, at the ſame time, they condemn that atrocious and blind rage which, in its vengeance, confounds the guilty and the innocent. Accuſe me of too much toleration, and I ſhall glory in the defect. It were to be wiſhed ſovereigns could not be reproached with any other errors.

So much for the Jeſuits. As to the comte de

de Crillon, do not vex yourſelf concerning what I have written of him; I believe him to be exceedingly virtuous, and ſuch as you have deſcribed. I am not raſh enough to judge of the merit of a foreigner, of whom I have no knowledge. I did but repeat the public opinion, and what has been written of him from Peterſburg, Denmark, and other places, which he viſited on his journey.

I am far alſo from conceiving M. de Guibert to be one of the herd of men. He is a ſprouting hero, who perhaps may one day be the ſaviour of France, and make the world reſound with his exploits. Theſe are among poſſibilities, and conſequently may be. As to his tragedy, I have not heard a word of it; though I think it moſt excellent, on the faith of a chriſtian. D'Alembert has taſte, he has approved the drama, and I ought not to deviate from his creed.

I know not what to ſay of the inviſible Diderot. He reſembles thoſe celeſtial beings of which we continually ſpeak, but never ſee. I lately happened to open one of his books, and caſt my eye on theſe words—"Young man, "take, and read."—On which I immediately ſhut it again, well comprehending that it was not written for me, I being more than ſixty

years of age. Letters from Peterſburg tell us that the empreſs ordered him a coat and a wig, becauſe he was dreſſed in ſo ſtrange a manner that, till he was thus adorned, he could not appear at court.

Should this apology be ſtill inſufficient, to make you believe me a good Frenchman, I ſhall add, for my own juſtification, that I greatly admire the Gauls, when they have common ſenſe, and underſtanding; that I have a very high opinion of Turenne, Conde, Luxemburg, Gaſſendi, Bayle, Boileau, Racine, Boſſuet, and even Deſhoulieres, who are gone; and of Voltaire, and D'Alembert, who are living. But, my admiring faculties being confined to certain limits, it is impoſſible I ſhould compriſe, among theſe my acts of veneration, the abortions of Parnaſſus, the philoſophers of paradoxes and ſophiſms, would-be wits, generals continually vanquiſhed and never victorious, painters without colouring, miniſters without probity, &c. &c.—Having made my confeſſion, condemn me if you can; in which caſe I will obtain abſolution from Aretine, who far from admiring paſſed his whole life in finding fault.

I know not whether Paris may be compared to Sodom, or Sodom to Paris; but it is very certain I ſhall never have any inclination to

burn

burn either place. I ſhall ſay, with the angel Ithuriel, if all be not well, all is paſſable.

Live happy and contented, under the reign of the ſixteenth Louis. Let philoſophy contribute to your mirth. This is the greateſt good you can expect from it, and this is what I ſincerely wiſh you.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER CXVII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, September 12, 1774.

I IMAGINE your majeſty is at this moment more than ever occupied; and I fear being an intruder, by writing this letter. The peace which is lately concluded, between Ruſſia and the moſt ſublime and moſt contemptible Porte, muſt involve your majeſty in more than one important affair. However pacific Philoſophy may be, I know not whether ſhe have yet any cauſe to rejoice at the peace, till ſhe be well aſſured that the tranquillity of Europe will not be diſturbed by it; for, if war there muſt be, ſhe would be better pleaſed to ſee war between the Turks and Ruſſians, than between nations more

more worthy to profit by the advantages of peace.

It is affirmed our young monarch is no more a friend to war than his grandfather was, whom he in that reſembles; and all France bleſſes this propenſity in the king, neceſſary as it is to the people. Your majeſty is an example of this propenſity, whatever may be ſaid by thoſe who are unacquainted with you, and who will not underſtand that, the more a monarch hates war, the better prepared is he to make war with ſuperiority. But not ſo the king whom we have loſt, and concerning whom your majeſty thinks with ſo much truth and juſtice. He wanted fortitude, which defect was the cauſe of the misfortunes of his reign: had he poſſeſſed that virtue, he would have been an excellent prince.

His ſucceſſor, who has only been four months on the throne, diſcovers a decided intention to do good, and to have none but honeſt men for his miniſters. This appears from every choice he has hitherto made. He has in particular appointed one of the moſt enlightened and moſt virtuous men in the kingdom his comptroller general *; and, if good ſhould not be the reſult, we muſt conclude good is an impoſſibility. The miniſters he has diſmiſſed were held in

* The truly great and good M. Turgot. T.

horror,

horror, by the nation; and their removal has occaſioned univerſal joy. Other great knaves, though in a ſubaltern ſtation, but poſſeſſed of important places, have been expelled from office; and, as ſome ſtill remain, the hopes of the public are that the king will make a clear houſe. I am neither an enthuſiaſt nor a paraſite, yet do I join all France in good wiſhes, for a prince who begins in ſo deſirable a manner.

I ſhall ſpeak no more of the Jeſuits. I hope your majeſty's conduct to them will teach them that toleration which they have ſo little practiſed. But, averſe as I am to wiſh them any harm, as citizens and as men, I ſhould be exceedingly afflicted to ſee them, as Jeſuits, in kingdoms where they might eaſily be guilty of all that miſchief which they dare not attempt, in your majeſty's dominions.

Whatever may have been written from Ruſſia, Denmark, Lapland, or Iceland, concerning the comte de Crillon, I take the liberty, ſire, to perſiſt in my former opinion of him; and I am only ſorry that the great Frederic has not ſeen enough of him, to render him that juſtice which perſons whoſe judgments are of ſo little worth have refuſed.

Your majeſty is acquainted with M. de Guibert; and, as the Ruſſians and Icelanders have not

not written any thing to his diſadvantage, I am the more tranquil, reſpecting the opinion I gave of him, after knowing that which your majeſty has been pleaſed to give. He was very deſirous of returning to gain inſtruction, in Pruſſia; but the duke d'Aiguillon, for the beſt or worſt of poſſible reaſons, has not thought proper to grant permiſſion.

I ſhall ſay little concerning the Gauls, for I allow that the remarks of your majeſty are but too true. Yet do I believe that our follies, and frivolity, are more the conſequences of government than of national character. What perhaps will aſtoniſh your majeſty is that, during the ſix weeks which the theatres were ſhut up in Paris, from the beginning of May to the fifteenth of June, no one regretted them, nor even thought of them; becauſe the public were occupied by great hopes, from the new reign, which the king begins to realiſe. So true is it, if I am not miſtaken, that the Gauls only want great objects on which they may fix their attention with more gravity than they uſually ſeem capable of, in order to render them leſs frivolous, and more rational.

I conclude with reproaching myſelf for the moments of which I have robbed your majeſty; wiſhing you health, peace, and happineſs; for,

as to glory, you have as much as you can deſire of every kind, and enough to render a crowd of kings famous.

M. de Catt will give your majeſty an account of what I have done, reſpecting the ſtatuary, who deſires to enter your ſervice; and I will not weary your majeſty with the ſubject.

I am, with the moſt profound reſpect, &c.

LETTER CXVIII.

From the King.

October, 1774.

MY occupations are not ſo conſiderable as you ſuppoſe. They are diminiſhed, in part, by the concluſion of peace with the Turks. And, after all, man is born for labour; indolence not only renders him miſerable but often criminal. You have no cauſe to fear new troubles ſhould ariſe in the north, or in the weſt of Europe. Thoſe who envy us believe all their reveries to be realities, and publiſh their abſurdities; but it is as neceſſary to be on our guard againſt political as againſt theological folly. If your monarch love peace as much as you ſuppoſe, he may afford proofs, by tranquillizing his neighbours,

bours, and pacifying the diſſenſions which are fomenting in the ſouth of Europe. He appears to be cautious and ſage in his proceedings: and to poſſeſs qualities which are only the reſult of long experience at his age is a thing very uncommon.

A poem has appeared here entitled *Louis in the Elyſian Fields*, which you may have already ſeen at Paris, and in which Louis is equitably judged by Minos. It is a ſport of the imagination, and perhaps it is againſt the etiquette to ſport on the death of a great monarch; but every opportunity is caught at, by thoſe who ſeek their own amuſement.

I ſhall ſay no more of the comte de Crillon, whom I reſpect and honour as a valiant knight. Confeſs however that a man may poſſeſs good qualities and yet be tinctured with dulneſs. He travelled in company with the prince of Salm, who is really amiable. The prince attracted every perſon's notice, and his converſation was ſought, while the other was left to his profound meditations. It was neceſſary to dig to find the hidden treaſures of your Crillon, and it is not every body who loves to dig; eſpecially when it is a bird of paſſage *. All the harm that can happen

* *Dig* and *bird of paſſage* is one of the disjointed metaphors which

pen to me will be, I ſhall have only imperfectly known the comte de Crillon.

I have heard the praiſes of M. Turgot, who is ſaid to be an honeſt, an aſſiduous, and a ſage man. So much the better for your poor peaſants, whoſe burthens, if he have any compaſſion, he will lighten. A proper choice of miniſters is no doubt the moſt important duty of the ſovereign; but the reign of a monarch muſt not be eſtimated by ſo ſhort a period as three months. I collect the acts of your ſixteenth Louis, and, ſhould I live two or three years longer, I may then be able to ſay what I augur of his reign. I recollect the prophecies of Voltaire, concerning the king of Denmark, which did not happen to be very fortunate. The beſt way is to propheſy after your hero is dead.

I here ſend you the atteſtation of the conduct of a young officer, which Voltaire has aſked. I know not what uſe is intended to be made of it, but it is given by the governor of Weſel; and, as it is in German, I ſend a tranſlation, authenticated according to the original. Catt is afflicted with cholic, laſſitude, dyſentery, quinſey, hæmorrhoides, ſpaſms in the bladder, and I know

which occaſionally occur, to perplex a tranſlator; and render him unable to decide, whether he ought to prefer good taſte or rigid veracity, in his verſion.

not how many more diſeaſes. He has not ſaid a word to me of the ſtatuary; I am therefore wholly ignorant of the ſubject. My wiſhes are for your health, proſperity, and preſervation.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER CXIX.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, October 31, 1774.

M. GRIMM, who has been returned a few days, has remitted me a dialogue, on the part of your majeſty, between two ladies who, each in turn, made her fortune in a very grand and unexpected ſtyle; who both were virgins, one as good as the other; as good maids as the maid of Orleans herſelf. I was much diverted by the dialogue; and this has incited a deſire in me to read another dialogue, in verſe, which your majeſty did me the honour to mention, in a letter you wrote to me. I have no doubt but the grand ſignor plays his part in it, and the grand queen (for ſuch ſhe had the honour to be, and who has enjoyed the dignity ſtill more grand of having her name inſerted in the high genealogy, the authority of which indeed is ſomewhat

ſomewhat ſuſpected) I have no doubt, I ſay, that theſe two illuſtrious interlocutors will ſpeak entirely in character.

I ſhould be much better pleaſed to read this dialogue, than to be ruminating as I am, at this moment, concerning diſſenſions fomenting in the ſouth of Europe, which your majeſty has been pleaſed to mention. I in my retreat am ignorant of the quarrels of kings. I wiſh they were all as pacific as your majeſty, and at the ſame time as well prepared for war, by which preparation it may beſt be avoided. God preſerve us from this ſcourge! May he at leaſt give M. Turgot, our new comptroller-general, time to repair the evils under which we long have groaned. With good reaſon has he been praiſed to your majeſty, for he certainly is one of the beſt informed, moſt laborious, and juſt men in the kingdom; whoſe probity is incorruptible, and whoſe virtue can withſtand all temptation; of which he has afforded more than one proof, during the two months that he has adminiſtered our finances. As the king appears to love juſtice, truth, and worthy people, and to deteſt prieſts, knaves, and hypocrites, I hope he will daily acquire more confidence in that enlightened and virtuous man. This is the wiſh

of all France; for the happineſs of the people, and the glory of the king.

It is ſaid our monarch means to recal the parliament, which his predeceſſor had baniſhed. That which had been ſubſtituted was far from being ſufficiently ſelect, to obtain the confidence and public reſpect which magiſtrates ought to enjoy. The former parliament was open to very ſerious reproach; but it is to be hoped that the diſgrace in which it has been, for four years, will render it reaſonable and ſage. The fanatics groan to hear of its return; and this is a reaſon why it ſhould no longer be ſuperſtitious and fanatic, as it has but too often been.

I have written to inform M. de Voltaire that your majeſty has been kindly pleaſed to ſend a certificate, favourable to M. d'Etallonde, for which he ſeemed to wait with impatience. To render juſtice to the conduct of this young man, who has been ſo cruelly perſecuted, is an act worthy of your majeſty; and I do not deſpair but that ſuch a certificate may, at length, procure him happineſs.

All our letters, from Rome and Italy, affirm that the death of the pope is a maſter-piece of jeſuitical pharmacy. Could not your majeſty found a profeſſorſhip for theſe honeſt people, in their college, at Breſlau, to teach an art in which they

they appear to be ſo well ſkilled? The election of the ſucceſſor to Clement XIV. will to them be an event of the utmoſt importance; but I have no doubt but that the catholic princes, who are ſo well aware of the ſcientific art of the ſociety, will combine to induce the pope to beſtow this treaſure on princes who do not go to maſs, and who, in taking the ſacrament, need not fear the fate of the poor emperor, to whom brother Sebaſtian, of Montepulciano, gave ſo ſatisfactory a repaſt.

I am afflicted to hear of the ill ſtate of health of poor De Catt, who is a faithful ſervant to your majeſty, and well worthy of that intereſt you take in his misfortunes. I wrote to him circumſtantially, relative to the ſtatuary, that I might not importune your majeſty. This artiſt has determined to go to Berlin, at his own expence and riſk, that he may have the honour of offering his ſervices to your majeſty, and of making thoſe propoſals which he is deſirous to obtain, at entering your ſervice. He will be on the road when your majeſty ſhall receive this letter, and will ſoon after arrive.

I am, with moſt profound reſpect, &c.

LETTER CXX.

From the King.

November 15, 1774.

I HAVE been the more ſorry for the illneſs of De Catt becauſe his diſeaſe is of ſo ſingular a kind. The hæmorrhoides would not flow, and reduced him to the condition of Tireſias, without the interference of any goddeſs. The ſurgeons, who contemn diſeaſes as they do goddeſſes, pretend they can cure him by the application of cantharides, and he again begins to ſee; but his cure is not yet complete. Perhaps the virgin has puniſhed him, for having copied a certain dialogue; in which caſe I am, in part, the cauſe of his diſaſter. The nonſenſe which I occaſionally ſend you has no other merit than that of amuſing the writer, and making the reader laugh. This is the hobby-horſe of my old age, on which I ſometimes merrily mount.

I know not what I may have written to you, concerning the troubles that threaten the South; but I muſt leave prediction to Tireſias. A poor hermit as I am, in a corner of the North, I know not what will happen to-morrow, much leſs at a more diſtant period.

Your

Your young monarch acts ſagely, and I particularly admire his deſire to do good, which is all that can at preſent be expected. He has an arduous taſk to accompliſh, nor can he perform his duties but by making himſelf well acquainted with things, and ſtudying minutiæ, which will appear to him foreign and novel, conſidering the education he has received. Whether the old parliament return, or the new remain, I ſhall continue neuter, and ſhall not decide till I have firſt ſeen the ſum total of good, or ill, which ſhall be the reſult. We acataleptics are not haſty in our judgments. We are convinced that our reaſonings are often deceitful, and that no ſubject can be fully diſcuſſed. As a deduction from this reaſoning, I requeſt you not too ſuddenly to give faith to the calumnies which are rumoured againſt our good fathers. Nothing can be more falſe than the current report of the poiſoning of the pope. He was exceedingly chagrined that, when announcing the reſtitution of Avignon to the cardinals, he received no congratulations; and that intelligence ſo intereſting, to the holy ſee, ſhould be heard with ſo much coolneſs. A girl propheſied that he ſhould be poiſoned, on ſuch a day. But do you believe this girl was inſpired? The pope did not die in conſequence of this prophecy, but becauſe the juices were en-

tirely exhauſted. He was opened, and not the leaſt indication of poiſon diſcovered. But he reproached himſelf with his weakneſs, in having ſacrificed an order, like that of the Jeſuits, to the caprices of his rebellious children. During the latter part of his life, his temper was moroſe and haſty; which, with the debaucheries he was guilty of, contributed to ſhorten his days. Thus are the Jeſuits juſtified; and what remains of them will have no need of an arſenal for poniards, nor of pharmacy for deadly potions.

After having offered an apology for the innocence of theſe prieſts, I may well be permitted to add that of the poor officer, which I have addreſſed to you. I do not expect any attention will be paid to it, but we muſt nevertheleſs do our duty. Abominable ſuperſtition is more rooted in France than in any other country of Europe. Your biſhops and prieſts do not uſually forego their gripe, nor will they be converted by reaſon. That neceſſity which obliges them not to perſecute is the only mode of reducing them to toleration. I ſincerely wiſh my letter might be opened, and read, by your archbiſhop. He would bleſs God that Providence had not thought proper to place me on the throne of the Gauls, and his love for Louis XVI. would increaſe.

Our

Our tranquillity here is perfect, and I flatter myſelf this happy ſtate may continue, provided men are prudent. Peace is the mother of arts, to cultivate which the temple of Janus ought to be ſhut. This is the period at which your ſtatuary ſhould come hither. The works which I have ſeen by him are elegant, and in a good taſte. He will immediately find employment, on his arrival; and, provided his head be as ſage as his hands are intelligent, we ſhall agree very well.

If you want poetry, here is ſome for you; a new-year's gift, which may amuſe you for a moment, and no more. I hear nothing concerning your health, whence I conclude it is good: preſerve it carefully, for it is the only true wealth we can enjoy. No man intereſts himſelf more for the preſervation of Protagoras than the philoſopher of Sans Souci.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER CXXI.

From the King.

December 14, 1774.

THE ſtatuary is arrived, with a letter which he brings from you. We ſhall make our bargain, and he will not want work. I am obliged to you for the choice. Such performances of his as I have ſeen are excellent; and, from what you ſay, I will believe his brain to be better organized than that of his predeceſſor. If obliged to chooſe, I ſhould prefer a tranquil mind, with inferior abilities, to a more able artiſt, with a perpetually reſtleſs ſpirit, which diſturbs all with whom it has any intercourſe. Peace is at my age the thing moſt deſirable. At this period of life we feel a diſlike for whatever troubles our repoſe.

Grimm, who is young, thinks otherwiſe. I imagine he is determined to ſeek great adventures. I did not expect he poſſeſſed my portrait in porcelain; I was even ignorant that any ſuch exiſted. To be painted, we ought to be either Apollo, Mars, or Adonis; and, as I have not the honour to be any one of the three, I have concealed my face from the bruſh as much as I could,

could. If however you wiſh to have this porcelain, I will cauſe a ſmall parcel to be made up, at Berlin, and will ſend it you in the beſt condition poſſible.

Tireſias begins to recover his ſight. His organs have not been vitiated. His diſeaſe was occaſioned by the ardour of his blood, which was thrown with impetuoſity into the head, by the ſuppreſſion of the hæmorrhoides. Such are the accidents to which unhappy man is ſubject. Who ſhall tell us then that philoſophy is unneceſſary, in one of the worſt of worlds of this ſyſtem? It is exceedingly neceſſary, but rather in practice than ſpeculation. The firſt is a want, the ſecond a luxury. Pardon me this aſſertion, my dear Pythagoras, remembering the eſteem I have for you.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER CXXII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, December 15; the anniverſary of the Battle of Keſſelſdorf.

IT muſt have been, nor have I any difficulty in believing it, that all the clerks of all the poſt-offices of Germany, excluſive of thoſe of

of France, have had the curioſity to read the verſes which your majeſty did me the honour to ſend me; for the packet which contained thoſe verſes, and the letter of the 15th of November which accompanied them, did not arrive till three weeks after their date. This delay, added to the rheumatiſm, which for ſome days has deprived me of the uſe of my right arm, prevented me from returning my moſt humble and ſincere thanks to your majeſty, for the charming lines you have been pleaſed to ſend. They are full of poetry, imagination, and poignant, philoſophic ſatire, on all the diſorders of which we unfortunate Gauls have been the ſpectators, and the victims. This ſatire has a merit very uncommon, in works of ſuch a kind. It does not exaggerate; it neither paſſes the bounds of juſtice, nor of truth. I have read and ſhall read it, again and again, with the greateſt pleaſure. To give ſuch leſſons to your equals is an honour which appertains only to your majeſty.

I am enchanted at the good opinion which your majeſty appears to have entertained for our young king; which he daily juſtifies by new acts of equity and benevolence. I probably never ſhall approach him, nor certainly ſhall I ever have any favour to aſk; but I ſhall offer

up

up my prayers for his preſervation. Nor can I forbear to remark how fortunate it is for humanity that, of all the family of the Bourbons, the two princes moſt worthy to reign, are preciſely thoſe who at preſent hold the ſceptre; the kings of France and Spain. The heart of our king is upright, and virtuous; nor do we fear he ſhould be ſeduced by prieſts, or knaves; we are only in dread of hypocrites, who may aſſume the maſk of virtue. But fortunately theſe hypocrites ſo fooliſhly diſcovered themſelves, by their ſcandalous conduct, during the illneſs of the late king, that we are perſuaded the young prince is well acquainted with them, and will not be entangled in their ſnares. Nothing can equal the indignation of all France, againſt thoſe tutors who have educated our monarch, with negligence ſo great that it is with himſelf a ſubject of complaint! It is to be hoped he never will grant them his confidence.

We are in expectation of a pope, and we hope he will leave no Jeſuits, except in the ſtates of your majeſty, ſince you are pleaſed to ſuffer them there to remain. I am not aſtoniſhed that your majeſty will not believe the poor pontiff has been poiſoned, for you certainly would not keep ſuch able apothecaries a moment; but all our news from Italy is ſo poſitive, and ſo circum-

circumſtantial, on the ſubject, as not to leave a poſſibility of doubt. Your majeſty does me the honour to aſk if I believe the girl inſpired. I flatter myſelf you know me well enough not to ſuſpect I ſhould give faith to ſuch inſpiration; but I can very voluntarily believe that the knaves, who cauſed her to predict the death of the pope, had previouſly taken their meaſures, or were well determined to take them, that the prediction might be verified. Therefore, with your majeſty's permiſſion, I ſhall continue to exclaim, like Cato, "Let Carthage be deſtroyed!" Yet I ſhall add, the poiſoners if diſcovered excepted, it would be barbarous to reduce to wretchedneſs and deſpair the people who inhabited Carthage; and that it is a duty to render men, who would have been ambitious and intriguing Jeſuits, good and worthy citizens.

I hope the ſtatuary will be arrived when your majeſty ſhall receive the letter I have now the honour to write. I have every reaſon to believe your majeſty will be as well ſatisfied with him, perſonally, as you appear to be with his talents, and works. He is a good honeſt Fleming, whoſe greateſt paſſion will be to render himſelf worthy of your majeſty's favours. He ſhould by this have delivered a letter to your majeſty, in which I have earneſtly requeſted a favour

which I entreat you not to refuſe. This is that you would be pleaſed to grant me your portrait in porcelain, of your fine Berlin manufacture, ſimilar to the ſmall portrait, which is exceedingly beautiful and an excellent likeneſs, that I have ſeen in the poſſeſſion of M. Grimm. This portrait will be to me the moſt precious new-year's gift I ever during life received, and the deareſt preſent with which your majeſty can gratify and honour me.

I labour with all poſſible zeal to obtain juſtice for the officer, concerning whom your majeſty intereſts yourſelf. In conjunction with ſome worthy friends, as zealous as myſelf but with greater influence, I have already taken ſteps which I hope will not be ineffectual; but time and prudence are neceſſary to bring the affair to a happy concluſion. When this time ſhall come, I ſhall plead, if I think it neceſſary, the intereſt which your majeſty is pleaſed to take in it; and I hope your name will be of *ſome weight* in the ſcale.

Permit me, ſire, with your uſual goodneſs, to preſent my beſt wiſhes at the beginning of the coming year in your behalf. This, if I do not miſtake, is the thirty-ſixth of your glorious reign, and which increaſes the ſentiments of admiration, gratitude, and profound reſpect, with which I am, &c.

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LETTER CXXIII.

From the King.

January 6, 1775.

I SHOULD be much flattered, were I certain that my bad verſes had for a moment amuſed you. I imagine they have been read by the clerks of the poſt-office, becauſe they are in the habit of opening letters. The preſent will not be opened, for Taffart, with whom the contract is ſigned, will deliver this, and another of older date, of which he is the bearer, to you. I congratulate the French, at having reaſon to be ſatisfied with their king, and wiſh they may always have ſuch kings. The poſt of this monarch is a difficult one, for he has to counteract thouſands of men, whoſe purpoſe it is to dupe and pervert. Should he eſcape ſome, it will be ſtrange ſhould he not be intrapped by others. But, when the intentions of the ſovereign are juſt and the heart good, greater indulgence ſhould be granted kings than other men, who, being leſs expoſed to ſnares, may with more eaſe avoid them.

You inſiſt upon it that the pope has been poiſoned, but I am certain that all the letters which are written to Pruſſia proteſt againſt poiſon, and

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do not ſuppoſe there is any thing extraordinary in the death of Ganganelli. Perhaps indeed theſe Italians keep falſe weights and ſcales, and write what will be moſt agreeable to France and what may beſt ſuit Pruſſia. I do not underſtand any thing of the affair, except that I am certain my good Sileſian and Pruſſian fathers have not ſteeped their hands in ſuch horror. I give up Carthage to your mercy; I mean that which Calvin called Babylon; the hierarchy, and all its combined ſuperſtitions. To deliver the world from this would be doing good to mankind; but neither you nor I ſhall ſee that happy day, for the coming of which ages are neceſſary. And perhaps old ſuperſtition ſhall but be baniſhed by new; for I am perſuaded that a propenſity to ſuperſtition is born with man.

You ſhall have the portrait, which certainly is not worth the carriage, and in the workmanſhip of which conſiſts its whole value.

I fear with reaſon leſt philoſophy, while protecting innocence, ſhould be wrecked againſt your preſidents *à mortier* who are walled in with formalities, and too obſtinately attached to ancient prejudices flexibly to relax their ſeverity. It ſeems that poor d'Etallonde muſt remain diſinherited, for not having had the wit to make a bow to a dirty bit of dough, which

was

was carried in proceſſion by a prieſt, in the ſtreets of Amiens. Dreadful is it indeed when the life of man depends on ſuch abſurdities!

I not only wiſh you a good new year, my dear Anaxagoras, but in addition every proſperity you could wiſh yourſelf; and eſpecially health, without which all the reſt are non-entities.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER CXXIV.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, February 7, 1775.

I PROSTRATE myſelf at your majeſty's feet. I want expreſſions to teſtify my ardent and tender gratitude. M. Taſſart has brought me the ſuperb porcelain which your majeſty has done me the honour to ſend. I was before but too happy and too much honoured by the ink-ſtand which, fifteen years ago, you were pleaſed to beſtow, that very day on which you were covered with glory on the plains of Lignitz. But it is no doubt your majeſty's pleaſure, and in which you have committed no violence on me, that I ſhould not only think of you, while writ-

ing,

ing, but that, every morning, while taking my frugal repaſt, it ſhould be accompanied by rendering thanks, after having written on the charming box that incloſes the porcelain the two words ſo dear to my heart—*Dedit Fredericus.*

But, if I am unable to expreſs my feelings for ſo fine a preſent, how ſhall I paint my gratitude for the portrait, which your majeſty has had the goodneſs to add? I ſhall bear it inceſſantly about me, and at night ſhall place it beſide my pillow, where the devout place their crucifix and their holy water. I moſt carefully preſerve the portrait your majeſty was pleaſed to give me almoſt twelve years ago, and which repreſents you at the head of your armies. This which I have juſt received ſhows you in your cabinet, as the moſt amiable of philoſophers, with the moſt auguſt and noble countenance. The firſt I ſhall ever admire; the ſecond I ſhall adore! All my friends, whom I have informed how great the reſemblance of this new portrait is, have already paid it their moſt tender homage, and have requeſted copies, that they may participate my pleaſure, and my happineſs.

M. de Voltaire has ſent me the tragedy of Don Pedro, in which are paſſages, and even ſcenes, worthy of himſelf. To this he has added an eulogium on reaſon, which in my opinion is

one of the moſt charming things he has written. I imagine he has ſent it to your majeſty. What a man! And at the age of eighty! But he is moſt occupied by the atrocious yet ridiculous affair of the young man for whom your majeſty intereſts yourſelf, and who appears highly worthy of your protection, from what M. de Voltaire has written to me of his character and induſtry. A great number of worthy people are now buſied concerning this abominable affair, which renders our Gallic judges alike odious and contemptible. Your majeſty may depend on my zeal and efforts, to waſh away the affront with which we have been diſgraced, by that infamous ſentence.

Our young king continues to make himſelf beloved, to act well, and in fine to afford us the moſt happy of proſpects. His worthy acts are continually cited, as are his remarks, full of good ſenſe and reaſon. He has choſen virtuous men for his miniſters, and one eſpecially, our comptroller general, who will re-eſtabliſh our finances, if avarice, envy, and calumny, will ſuffer him to act.

I am exceedingly afflicted for the ſituation of poor M. de Catt, whoſe ſervices, from the tender veneration which I know he entertains for your majeſty, muſt be greatly miſſed.

M. Taſſart

M. Taſſart is delighted to enter your majeſty's ſervice, and wiſhes already to be at Berlin, where he would have remained had not indiſpenſable buſineſs called him back to France. He is determined to repair to your majeſty's feet, according to his promiſe, toward the end of July at the lateſt. I believe I may aſſure your majeſty you will be well ſatisfied with his capacity, his works, and his character; and that you will find him more prudent, and more worthy, than moſt of the French artiſts, with whom you have had ſo little reaſon to be pleaſed. To complete his happineſs, he has a favour to demand of your majeſty; which is that, beſide the work-ſhop which has been provided for him, you would be pleaſed to grant him a houſe or apartments for himſelf and his family. I have led him to hope your majeſty will not refuſe him this favour, not doubting but you have ſome ſuch apartments at your own diſpoſal, in your capital. This will complete the benefactions conferred by your majeſty, and increaſe the gratitude of M. Taſſart; to which mine may be added, from the intereſt I take in his welfare, and the certitude in which I am that your majeſty will never repent having rendered the ſituation of this artiſt agreeable, and fortunate.

I am, with the moſt tender gratitude, and the moſt profound reſpect, &c.

LETTER CXXV.

From the King.

February 22, 1775.

I AM glad you are pleaſed with the trifles I have ſent you; they will at leaſt remind you of me when you take your coffee; and it will always be a great pleaſure to me that my name may for a moment engage the attention of Anaxagoras, whoſe mind is occupied with the profound meditations of philoſophy. I ſhall order it to be noticed, in my funeral oration, that the remembrance of me robbed infiniteſimals of a minute; and this will be the moſt flattering thing that can be ſaid of me.

I have been in company with comte Czernicheff, with whom I have converſed much of you, and of Louis XVI; but more however of the philoſopher than of the monarch; becauſe the one has eſtabliſhed his reputation, and the other has his reputation to make.

The king is ſaid to be angry with his parliament, and ſo am I; for I by no means love acts

acts of atrocity added to injuſtice; and, I not only think theſe long-robed gentlemen ought to repair the wrong they have done d'Etallonde, but, I ſhould condemn them to raiſe the unfortunate La Barre from the dead. All the letters I receive from Paris affirm Voltaire is ſoon to viſit the metropolis, that the queen wiſhes to ſee him, and that the nation is to reward him for the honour which, by his writings, it has acquired. I have not ſeen the new works by him, which you mention; they are worthy to be ſent into modern Greece, to that Athens called Paris, but neither to the Vandals nor the Oſtrogoths. I ſhall receive them however from Holland. We have nothing here except an admirable tranſlation of Taſſo, with a very ſingular preface. Voltaire ſupports his exiſtence in a marvellous manner; and, though his body denotes age, his mind has all the freſhneſs and the graces of youth. But every man is not allowed, like him, to poſſeſs an immortal ſoul.

We have the duke de Lauzun here, and Montmorency-Laval, the moſt ancient baron in Europe. Theſe are flambeaux, that come to ſhed light amid our Teutonic darkneſs. They will paſs rapidly away, like comets, to return to thoſe happy ſpheres in which they are fixed by

fate, and again plunge us into our native obſcurity.

You Pariſians will once more put on your doublets*, will have your holy vials, your conſecrations, your coronation cavalcades, your feſtivals and admirable ſhews, your hair frized two and twenty inches high; and we ſhall only have the ſtatuary Taſſart, for whom we cannot find ſo much as a lodging; for I have long ſince given every inhabitable place to one or another. We ſhall find expedients however. We muſt build; but ground to build on will be the difficulty. This is my affair, and I will do my beſt. In the mean time, take care of your health, and have a noble emulation to wreſtle with Voltaire; when you have paſſed your eightieth year, preſent the world with a ſolution of ſome fine mathematical problem. Such are the wiſhes of the hermit of Sans Souci, for his dear Anaxagoras.

On which I pray, &c.

* Alluding to the ancient dreſſes, ſtill preſerved in the public ceremony of the coronation. T.

LET-

LETTER CXXVI.

From the King.

March 16, 1775.

IT ſeeming that the porcelain of Berlin was to your taſte, I have ſent you a china buſt of one of the moſt celebrated men in Europe, the merit and value of which conſiſt in its reſemblance. By this eſſay you will perceive that even our artiſts honour the talents of great men, each in their kind; and that, heavy as our good Germans are, they are yet ſufficiently enlightened to render homage, where homage is due.

Whole tribes of Ruſſians have paſſed through Berlin, who pretend they are on their travels, to form both heart and mind. The duke de Lauzun, who made a conſiderable ſtay here, is gone to drive away dulneſs, and make love at Warſaw. I fear, unleſs Paris, making a generous effort, ſhould ſend ſome one to poliſh us, we ſhall inceſſantly grow ruſty. The frozen ſhores of the Baltic render the mind as frigid as the body; and we ſhould be ſo many icicles, were not ſome Gallic Prometheus occaſionally to bring fire from Heaven, to reanimate us. I know one who might do us this ſervice, yet will

do no ſuch thing; for it is ſaid he is the perpetual ſecretary to an academy, and has lately been appointed intendant of the lakes and rivers. Should you meet ſuch a perſon, give my compliments to him, and aſſure him that no man is more intereſted in his welfare than the anchorite of Sans Souci. *Vale.*

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER CXXVII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, April 12, 1775.

I DID not till this day, April 12, receive the letter your majeſty did me the honour to write, dated March 16th, in which you have been pleaſed to inform me of the porcelain buſt, which you have had the goodneſs to ſend, after having previouſly beſtowed the richeſt preſents of the ſame kind; and eſpecially after having beſtowed your own portrait, which left me nothing to wiſh, and which I have had ſet in a manner almoſt unbecoming a philoſopher, that I might always wear it without fear that it ſhould be injured.

Your majeſty has done me the honour to inform

form me that the buſt you have been pleaſed to give me is of *one of the moſt celebrated men in Europe.* I ardently wiſh it were the buſt of your majeſty; but you would not ſpeak thus of yourſelf; nor does Europe wiſh you ſo to ſpeak; for the qualifying praiſe of one of the moſt celebrated when applied to the greateſt and moſt illuſtrious prince of the age, whom the few famous men now exiſting regard as their example and their chief, would be very modeſt. If it be the buſt of Voltaire, as I ſuppoſe it to be, I ſhall write beneath it—*The portrait of a great man, given by a man more great.* In fine, I wait with much impatience for this new proof of your majeſty's bounty; nor ſhall I fail, when I receive it, again to teſtify my ardent and reſpectful gratitude, the expreſſion of which I was unwilling to delay. Let me entreat your majeſty to accept this gratitude with your uſual goodneſs, and eſpecially to believe that words are very incapable of conveying the ſentiments of my heart.

The comte de Czernicheff, whom your majeſty did me the honour to mention in your laſt letter, and with whom I have often converſed of the glory, the ſupreme talents, and the virtues of your majeſty, and particularly of my own admiration and devotedneſs, will no doubt have done theſe feelings juſtice, ſince he has been

kind enough to ſpeak of me to your majeſty, for whom he, like all Europe, appeared to entertain the higheſt veneration.

I do not think we ſhall ſee Voltaire at Paris. I doubt whether his health will permit him to undertake the journey; and ſtill more whether the court be in any haſte to enjoy his company. He will find us what he five and twenty years ago left us, doing and uttering much folly; one of the moſt ſerious acts of which, becauſe its conſequences have been execrable, is the affair of the unfortunate d'Etallonde, concerning which many worthy people continue buſied. But we have to contend with a body of men, which (as a body) is ſtill very abſurd and barbarous. Juſtice and reaſon muſt wreſtle with ſuperſtition, atrocity, and pride united; and the conteſt is unequal.

The ſieur Taſſart, whom I occaſionally ſee, never fails to teſtify how enraptured he is to enter the ſervice of the great man, who is the moſt enlightened judge of talents. He is ſo eager to perform his duty that he will greatly haſten his departure. He thinks to ſet off in a month, and to arrive at the beginning of June; that is to ſay, about ſix weeks ſooner than he imagined he ſhould arrive. I once more take the liberty to recommend the affair of lodging him

him to your majeſty, which will complete his happineſs, and if poſſible increaſe his ardour and zeal, for the ſervice of your majeſty.

I am little intereſted, ſire, in behalf of my countrymen who travel to ſhine, and who generally render the nation ridiculous. It is ſufficiently ſo at home, and need not export its folly and frivolity.

I am much affected by the intereſt which your majeſty has been pleaſed to betoken for M. de Catt, who appears to be moſt grateful for your bounty. This is the ſubject of all his letters, and I venture to ſay he deſerves your kindneſs, by being wholly devoted to your majeſty, and by his inviolable fidelity. Such are the ſentiments which every virtuous man, who approaches your majeſty, ought to feel. Thoſe who are not virtuous may think otherwiſe, but their complaints will be your praiſe. Yet am I bold enough to claim your kindneſs, in behalf of an unfortunate man, who affirms detraction has injured him with your majeſty. I ſpeak of the ſieur E***, who conjures your majeſty to liſten to the proofs which he is deſirous to preſent of his innocence. I occaſionally ſaw him, during his ſtay at Paris. His conduct appeared to me prudent and good; nor have I heard any thing of him which could inſpire unfavourable ideas.

ideas. All he requeſts of your majeſty is the permiſſion of ſelf-juſtification. A thouſand times do I aſk pardon for the freedom I have taken, to preſent the requeſt of the unfortunate; of whom I had not dared to ſpeak, had I thought him culpable.

I am, &c.

LETTER CXXVIII.

From the King.

May 8, 1775.

YOU have well divined: the buſt which I have ſent is that of Voltaire. Its merit conſiſts in its reſemblance; it is Voltaire himſelf, and wants nothing but ſpeech. You will anſwer that is the greateſt want it could have: but ſculpture and porcelain have not this gift. And, that perfection may be obtained, you muſt look on the buſt, and read the Henriade. Were you here, our artiſts would not be idle; and I am certain your buſt would ſoon ſtand by the ſide of that of Voltaire. But we have dukes, and the moſt ancient barons of France, for viſitors; while thoſe whom we ſhould highly prefer will not condeſcend

condeſcend to bear their torch hither, that our horizon may be enlightened.

I ſuſpect you underſtand the eulogiums I have written on theſe lords, who have not diſdained to viſit our ruſtic abodes, to be ironical. They are modern Columbuſes, who have traverſed Hercynian foreſts, to examine the ſavages who inhabit the ſhores of the Baltic. They were aſtoniſhed to ſee us walk on our two hind feet; but we have candidly confeſſed we are indebted for this to the zeal of Louis XIV, who ſent us a colony of Huguenots, from whom we have derived as many benefits as have been beſtowed by the ſons of Ignatius on the Iroquois. Still however are we in a rude ſtate; we are ignorant of a multitude of new fangled phraſes, with which the fertile and elegant fancies of your men of faſhion have enriched the French tongue. We wiſh to learn the language of the toilette, and to be able to harangue on trinkets, and plumes of feathers; to keep up an intereſting converſation on the beſt manner of placing patches, and laying on rouge, and a hundred things of the like gravity, to which our ſtupidity cannot bend. We are ſo humbled, when we hear them declaim on court-days, and levees, private audiences, and the honour of bidding his majeſty good morning, that we ſink into abſolute non-

entity

entity in the preſence of theſe men of the firſt faſhion, who give us deſcriptions ſo awful. We cannot, like the Grecian philoſopher, thank the gods for having created us man, rather than beaſt; for having been born in Athens, rather than in Bœotia; and in an enlightened rather than in an ignorant age. We are not ſo much even as Bœotians; nay, we are worſe than guide-poſts, ſet up in a croſsway, in the north of Germany, on the banks of the Baltic. Ovid, baniſhed into Pontus, never ſhivered ſo much in thoſe abodes, where the Danube with its ſeven mouths falls into the Euxine, as we do annually here. Imagine then what muſt be the impreſſion, on the inhabitants of a country ſo ill treated by Nature, at the arrival of modern Athenians, ſparkling with grace, wit, and gentility. Let this at leaſt be my apology; and no longer let the citizen of a nation celebrated among the ancient Romans themſelves, for its candour and good faith, be ſuſpected of malignity.

Your recommendation will certainly not be uſeleſs to the ſieur Taſſart. I have no houſe at my own diſpoſal, and have no other reſource than that of building a new one. Taſſart too will deſcribe the coronation at Rheims; the hoſtages for the holy phial; the proceſſion and the triumphal cars, worth ſix hundred thouſand livres; at which

which we ſhall be in ecſtaſies, admiring miracles ſuch as we could not even ſo much as imagine. This holy phial, which a dove brought from heaven to anoint a king of France, and which is never empty, will occaſion our good people, hearing of it, to exclaim—"Alas! when our Provençal "oil is all gone, we are obliged to buy more!" But there is only one moſt chriſtian king in the world, and we are far from being this king.

You Pariſians, who live in one continued round of opulence and grandeur, treat thoſe things as common, which to us ſeem extraordinary; nor can you conceive the impreſſion which, at this diſtance, they make on the ſimplicity of our manners. But here I ſtop, leſt I ſhould give offence to Infidels. Suſpect me of all you pleaſe, yet at leaſt do juſtice to the intereſt which I perſonally take in you, the admiration in which I hold your talents, and the prayers I put up for your welfare.

On which, &c.

LET-

LETTER CXXIX.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, May 17, 1775.

I HAVE received the new preſent with which your majeſty has been pleaſed to honour me, and do not loſe a moment to teſtify my lively gratitude. The buſt of M. de Voltaire is of greater worth, by being received from your auguſt and cheriſhed hand, than even by being that of an old and illuſtrious friend, whoſe image it ſo well recals to mind. The reſemblance is perfect, and the workmanſhip is equal to the higheſt expectation. The inſcription, *Immortalis*, from its truth, ſimplicity, and dignity, is worthy of the great man to whom it is conſecrated; and of the ſtill greater man by whom it has been imagined. Three words only are wanting which, with your majeſty's permiſſion, I ſhall take the liberty to add; ſignifying that this immortal man has been given me, by another immortal man. *Immortalis—ab immortali datus.*

May this immortal man, to his other ſo well merited titles to renown, add that of being the pacificator of the North, and of Europe! May he, by his aſcendancy and influence, drive far off

off that war with which the bulls threaten us frogs! The poor Gauls in particular, ſire, Gauls though they be, have no need of new misfortunes. Your majeſty is no doubt informed of the troubles, excited in different parts of the kingdom, by the dearneſs of bread; which has only been made a pretext, for bread was much dearer under the preceding miniſtry, yet no perſon complained. But the knaves who, protected by this miniſtry, traded in corn, to the prejudice of the people, cannot endure a miniſter who will not allow them to cheat; and they have been prodigal of gold, of perfidious manœuvres, and infamy of every kind, to overthrow, if they can, the moſt worthy and moſt virtuous man who ever was at the head of the finances. Fortunately our young king, who loves virtue, and on whom knaves cannot impoſe, knows the ſource of theſe troubles, and has reſtored order with a degree of calm fortitude which cannot be mentioned, by good citizens, but in terms of gratitude, and affection.

What may appear ſtrange, yet will not ſo appear to your majeſty, who is well acquainted with mankind, and eſpecially with prieſts, is that not one of the biſhops, who are continually ſeen at Verſailles, and whoſe dioceſes have ſuffered by theſe troubles, have addreſſed the peo-

ple that they might be appeaſed. The archbiſhop of Paris gave an example of this edifying ſilence; though his paſtoral letters are iſſued on the moſt trifling occaſions. Would your majeſty believe it! The king himſelf has been obliged to do the duty of this gentleman, and to ſend inſtructions to the pariſh prieſts, to inform them how they were to act; ſuch inſtructions as ſhould have been ſent by the biſhops. True it is, theſe inſtructions are a maſter-piece of wiſdom and goodneſs; which, it is very certain, neither the archbiſhop of Paris, the grand almoner, the firſt almoner, nor all the almoners at court were capable of writing. All theſe grand and firſt zealots, who ſo loudly declaim at court againſt philoſophers, becauſe philoſophers know and have pronounced ſentence on them, had before, by their folly and impudence, unmaſked themſelves, during the illneſs of the late king, whom they would have ſuffered to expire without the ſacraments! This adventure completely diſplayed the men. It is for the promotion of reaſon and virtue that they ſhould perſecute.

This prolixity can but little intereſt your majeſty. I am better pleaſed to ſpeak of the ſieur Taſſart, who is eager to repair to his duty, and who has haſtened his departure nearly a month, that he may enter the ſervice of your majeſty,

to

to whom to dedicate his life and labours appears to be his higheſt happineſs. I am convinced your majeſty will be better ſatisfied with the induſtry, the worth, and prudence, of this good Fleming, than with our turbulent French artiſts. He recommends himſelf to your majeſty's bounty relative to the houſe, hopes of which you have been pleaſed to give, in the letter you have done me the honour to write. This will crown his happineſs, and complete that gratitude with which he ſeems penetrated, in return for your majeſty's kindneſs.

After having ſo long detained your majeſty with our atrocious follies, I will not mention thoſe which are only ridiculous; our bad poetry, vile books, and the height of our caps. I would rather ſpeak to you of the riſe of the public funds, which, ſince the entrance of our new comptroller-general into office, has been incredible. Nor have the preſent troubles occaſioned any alteration; for the probity of the miniſter, and the virtues of the king, have acquired the full confidence of the people.

I am, with all the ſentiments of reſpect, gratitude, and admiration, which will never end but with life, &c.

LETTER CXXX.

From the King.

June 19, 1775.

A SHORT journey, equal to three hundred French leagues, has prevented me from anſwering you ſooner, my dear Anaxagoras. I am glad you are pleaſed with the buſt. Each, to the beſt of his ability, wiſhes to ſpread and perpetuate the fame of Voltaire; but brittle porcelain is not ſufficiently durable, for the man it repreſents. Our artiſts, however, zealous for the merit of the original, have laboured with all their powers to immortalize him; and I was very well pleaſed to find due tribute had been paid to ſuperior talents, at Berlin.

You ſuppoſe me to be in the clouds, occupied in governing Europe, but you are greatly miſtaken. I live retired, like the moſt pacific of men. Tranquillity reigns in the eaſt. The north reſpires, after having ſuſtained a cruel war; and the Gauls, as far as I am informed, have no troubles to fear.

I have admired the conduct of your young monarch, who has not been ſhaken by thoſe ſeditions which the cabals of bad ſubjects have excited,

excited, nor has ceded to the pernicious deſigns of ſome malecontents. This fortitude will confirm his future adminiſtration. People eager after change have made the experiment; he has reſiſted, and ſupported his miniſters, and they will no more hazard ſimilar attempts. The conduct of your biſhops and prieſts incites no aſtoniſhment in me. What good can be expected, from ſuch a race? They have but two gods; intereſt, and pride. It is proper that your young king ſhould be taught, by his own experience, what thoſe prejudices are in which he has been educated, by ſacred empirics. How happy are the Penſylvanians, who live wholly without them!

I have ſeen a M. de Laval Montmorency, and a M. Clermont Gallerande here, who ſeem to me to be amiable and modeſt young men, and without foppery. They have been with me into that country which I call our Canada; I mean Pomerelia, of which, I imagine, at their return, they will give a fine deſcription, to the Pariſians. Taylors and ſhoemakers are artiſts in great repute, in this country. I am at preſent appointing a hundred and eighty ſchools, proteſtant and catholic; and I regard myſelf as the Lycurgus, or Solon, of theſe barbarians. Imagine what they were, when I tell you, the

right of property was unknown, in this wretched land! The ſtrong, with impunity, oppreſſed the weak. But this is ended, and order will hereafter be introduced. The Auſtrians and Ruſſians find like confuſion, in their diſtricts; nor can theſe Iroquois be civiliſed, but by length of time and education.

Taſſart is arrived, and I will do every thing in my power to ſatisfy him; particularly in conſequence of your recommendation.

Now that my journeys are partly over, I ſhall return, with increaſe of appetite, to letters; the only aliment of the underſtanding, and the ſole amuſement worthy of beings who lay claim to reaſon, of which in reality it ſeems to me that we have very little. Adieu, my dear Anaxagoras! You will do a very meritorious work, ſhould you ſome time determine to come and viſit the hermit of Sans Souci. However I do not preſs you. You live in a country in which ſo many things are to be conſidered, and reconſidered, that the perpetual ſecretary of the academy cannot do all he wiſhes.

On which I pray, &c.

LET-

LETTER CXXXI.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, July 10, 1775.

NOT long ſince I was greatly alarmed for the health of your majeſty. I immediately haſtened to baron von Goltz, who removed my fears by the letters he had recently received; and, by the laſt letter which your majeſty has had the kindneſs to write, they have been wholly diſſipated. This has proved, not only that your majeſty enjoys perfect health, but, that cheerfulneſs, which is the general attendant on health, is yours. This, ſire, may you long enjoy, as well for your own glory as for the good of philoſophy, to which you are ſo neceſſary!

The praiſes you beſtow, on the conduct of our young monarch, are well founded. He wiſhes to do good, and for this end he leaves nothing unattempted. The choice of his ſervants is the beſt poſſible. He has lately appointed a ſucceſſor to the duke de la Vrillière, who at length goes out of office, to the general ſatisfaction. His ſucceſſor is M. de Maleſherbes, the man who, perhaps, with the moſt juſtice, is the moſt reſpected of any man in the nation,

and who will concur with M. Turgot, every-where to introduce order, and œconomy, which ſo long have been baniſhed. Great is the alarm, in knaves-camp! They will meet with no quarter from theſe men. The whole nation is enchanted, and offers up prayers for the health and proſperity of the king!

I ſpeak of theſe two virtuous miniſters with the more undiſguiſe, becauſe I neither hope nor will accept any thing from them. The comptroller-general, to whom I offered my ſervices, on condition they ſhould be gratuitous, told me, a few days ago, he ſhould be glad to do ſomething for me—"Beware of that!" was my reply. "I have no need of any thing; and it is "my wiſh that my attachment to you ſhould "not be liable to ſuſpicion."—In fine, ſire, the people all exclaim in chorus—"*The day more* "*bright appears*"—and hope their prayers will be heard.

The prieſts alone ſtand aloof, and ſilently murmur, without daring to be too loud. But the king knows prieſts to be what they are, from the care which they have *not* taken of his education. He has lately beſtowed a blue riband, upon the only honeſt man among his tutors; and he will no doubt do juſtice to the others,

by being deaf to their advice, ſhould they think proper to adviſe.

It is ſaid an account of the ceremonies of the coronation has been ſent to your majeſty, and you no doubt will have felt your indignation riſe at the affectation, and I may add the impudence, with which the prieſts have made the king take oaths to them, and them only. It is affirmed they acted better ſtill, on this occaſion; and that they ſuppreſſed that part of the ceremony at which two aſſiſtant biſhops ſhould have aſked the people, whether they acknowledged Louis XVI. for their king. Theſe good citizens would, had they the power, break thoſe ſacred ties which unite the king and the ſubject —obedience inſpired by love. I am very angry with the author of the *Syſtême de la Nature*, concerning the pretended compact which he imagines kings and prieſts have entered into, that they may oppreſs the people. Had this dangerous writer only opened an eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, he would have ſeen that, in all times, and on all occaſions, prieſts have been the greateſt enemies of kings. May all ſovereigns hereafter think of this race like you, ſire! A race that, as you ſo well have ſaid, are only acquainted with two gods, intereſt and pride.

I am very certain Pomerelia will feel the effects

of

of your majeſty's government; that the reign of knowledge and juſtice will begin; and that you will contribute to the happineſs, and information, of theſe Eſquimaux Indians.

I once more take the liberty to recommend the ſieur Taſſart to your majeſty's kindneſs; of which, by his labours and behaviour, I hope he will be found worthy.

It is to me a pleaſing ſpectacle to ſee your majeſty, in the midſt of ſo many occupations, find time notwithſtanding to beſtow on letters. They will derive advantage, as well from your works as from the protection you afford; and a medal might be ſtruck, with Frederic on one ſide and Minerva on the other, the legend of which ſhould be *Ditat et Defendit.* What you enrich you defend. For my own part, I can be little more than a ſpectator of the ſucceſs of philoſophy. My health will not allow me to labour much; it begins however to ſtrengthen; and I wiſh it might ſo far be confirmed as to permit me to travel, and preſent that juſt homage, profound reſpect, admiration, and lively gratitude, which I am indebted to you, for all your bounty.

With theſe ſentiments I ſhall all my life remain, &c.

LET-

LETTER CXXXII.

From the King.

August 5, 1775.

YOU have been needleſsly alarmed, my dear Anaxagoras! I had only ſome attacks of fever and cold, of which my journey into Pruſſia has entirely cured me. Believe me there can be no health without exerciſe. A journey is a more efficacious remedy than ipecacuanha, or the bark. Should you come to Pruſſia, you will recover your ſtrength. An old man, tolerably cheerful for his age, will communicate his good humour to you, and you will return to Paris ten years younger. An Engliſh lord *, with a hard name and an amiable mind, has brought me a letter from you. My firſt queſtions were —"How is the prince of philoſophers? Is he "merry? Does he work? Have you often been "in his company?"—"I! Oh no, ſir; I come "from London."——"Why D'Alembert is at "Paris?"—"Yes, but he ſent me a letter for "me to deliver to you."—Thus, from explanation to explanation, I learned, at laſt, he had formerly been at Paris, where he became acquainted with you, and that the firſt thing that

* Dalrymple. T.

ſtruck him was that, in order to be well received here, he muſt obtain a paſſport from Anaxagoras. He was not deceived; and I own he is one of the moſt amiable Engliſhmen I have met. I except nothing but his name, which I ſhall never remember. He ought to be rebaptiſed, and to be chriſtened Stair, which would be juſt as well.

Thanks to levity, we are no more told of the celeſtial pigeon, the holy vial, the coronation, nor of all thoſe wretched things which call to mind the ages of ignorance and barbariſm. I hear much good of your new king, and am charmed to hear it; ſtill with the proviſo that he perſevere, and that he do not cede to the arts of courtiers, and thoſe ſucceſſive aſſaults which are made on kings, that they may become the partakers of guilt and folly. Much is ſaid of his excellent choice of miniſters; but I am neither a monkey, that mimics, nor a parrot, that repeats: I wait awhile, that I may judge of men by their actions. I am neither acquainted with Turgot nor Maleſherbes, though very well with one Maleſieux, a man of information and amiable manners, who paſſed his life with madame du Maine, at Seaux. Your financiers and lawyers are known only to thoſe to whom they give bills payable on ſight, and to

ſuch

ſuch as gain their cauſes by the exertion of their talents. Their fame does not croſs the Rhine, unleſs in ſome well written brief on a celebrated cauſe. Foreigners love thoſe who afford pleaſure, and not the dull. The author of a good tragedy will be more generally known than the firſt preſident of a court of inqueſts, or the chancellor himſelf. Not to mention that theſe miniſters paſs away: the pedeſtal on which they ſtand is ſo unſtable that the leaſt ſhock tumbles them down, and we regret having been of their acquaintance. I, who am only ſixty-three, have ſeen above eighty miniſters in France. Theſe ſports of favour, or intrigue, ſeldom intereſt us, unleſs ſome ſuperior man happen to ariſe. I keep to Voltaire, and to Anaxagoras, who are in no need of exterior decoration. They decorate themſelves. I prefer them to ſuch men as La Vrillière, Amelot, La Verdie, Terrai, Rouillé, and all their tribe. Not that an able and honeſt miniſter is not eſtimable; but he ought to be ſatisfied with the approbation of that people to whom he does good. Men of letters inſtruct and afford pleaſure and amuſement to all Europe; it is but therefore juſt that they ſhould receive the applauſe of all Europe.

I leave your biſhops to play their tricks at their own good pleaſure. They are moulds in which

which to caſt folly; nor can any thing better be expected from them: I abandon them to the anathemas of the Encyclopediſts, and devote them and their whole race to the infernal gods, if ſuch there be. But not ſo my good Jeſuits. They are my pet lambs; not as monks, but as tutors for youth, and men of letters, to preſerve whom is uſeful to ſociety.

I have ſeen Le Kain act, and have admired his playing. Were he leſs violent he would be the Roſcius of his age. I delight to ſee the paſſions repreſented naturally, as they are. The heart is then affected; but I immediately become cold when art hides and ſtifles nature. You will exclaim—"Theſe are your Germans, "with their icy paſſions! They take offence at "ſtrength of expreſſion, which they are inca-"pable of feeling!" It may be ſo. I will not venture to write a panegyric on my countrymen. True it is, they neither pull down mills nor ſpoil the ſeed wheat, while complaining of the dearneſs of corn. They have hitherto neither had any maſſacre of St. Bartholomew nor wars of the Fronde. But, as the world progreſſively grows wiſer, our wits hope all this may in good time come to paſs; eſpecially if the Gauls would but honour us with a little mental friction. Mentioning the Gauls, I always except men like

like Voltaire and D'Alembert, whom I ſhall admire till the very moment when Nature ſhall return me to the clay of which ſhe formed me firſt.

On which I pray, &c.

END OF VOLUME XI.